

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

FOR THE MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL AREA



Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership

February 1998

CAPITOL AREA ARCHITECTURAL AND PLANNING BOARD

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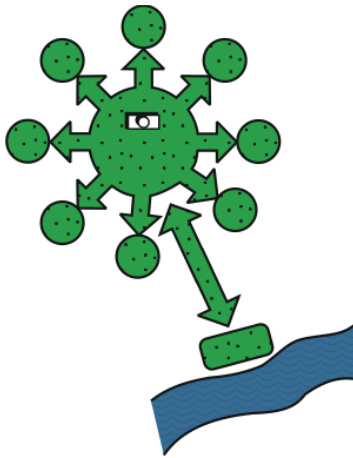
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The Vision

The Vision

The Vision is for a Capitol Area that is memorable as the symbolic heart of the state, and as a good and responsive neighbor to those who live and work nearby. In recent decades, a physical separation and a cultural distance have grown between the Capitol Area and the Capital City. As the centenary of the Capitol Building approaches, a clear consensus is emerging to reunite these two entities, so that they may enter the next millennium with a shared sense of pride and purpose.



*Capitol and Mall
extend to connect
neighborhoods,
downtown and the
riverfront.*

An important difference between this Comprehensive Plan and its predecessor is that it treats different parts of the Capitol Area differently, and in some respects, transcends formal boundaries. While the Capitol is acknowledged as a symbol and focus for the Capital City, the area in which it is located is recognized as an integral part of the city and its neighborhood structure.

Purpose

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to give form to this vision; to equip the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) with the tools it needs to consistently guide physical improvements and new developments towards fulfillment of the goals of the Vision. It is a baseline against which complex proposals for action can be measured by the community and by those entrusted with decision-making. It provides a foundation for the formulation of public policy and the allocation of public resources. A comprehensive plan connects the visions and aspirations of the present with their realization in the future. This is a long range policy document. It does not address location or timing of specific improvements.

Capitol Area design and development are guided by the *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*, *Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*, and by the Department of Administration's *Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies* (1993, Supplement 1995). Implementation strategy is presented in the *Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*. Regulations governing zoning issues are found in the *Zoning and Design Rules for the Capitol Area*. These documents will hereby be referred to as the Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Plan, Specific Actions and the Zoning and Design Rules, if not by their complete titles.

Background

The realization of this vision requires an understanding of issues that are rooted in past planning principles. The Comprehensive Plan builds upon these past efforts in providing a framework for action by the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board in its guidance of the area's development. It sets forth explicit purposes and objectives and emphasizes urban design and development guidelines that make it a useful and productive document.

The mission of the CAAPB as defined by statutory authority M.S. 15.50 is to:

- n Preserve and enhance the dignity, beauty, and architectural integrity of the Capitol, the buildings immediately adjacent to it, the Capitol grounds, and the Capitol Area.
- n Protect, enhance, and increase the open spaces within the Capitol Area when deemed necessary and desirable for the improvement of the public enjoyment thereof.
- n Develop proper approaches within the Capitol Area for pedestrian movement, the highway system, and mass transit system so that the area achieves its maximum importance and accessibility.
- n Establish a flexible framework for growth of Capitol buildings that will remain in keeping with the spirit of the original Cass Gilbert design.

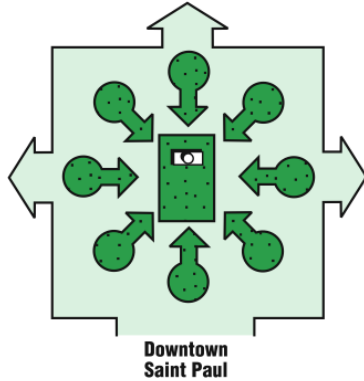
The CAAPB's responsibility can be described as a critical but often missing piece in project design and development. These responsibilities include:

- n Providing design context and architectural guidelines to individual projects so that each project is a step towards making the Capitol a more vibrant, architecturally cohesive and well-planned area.
- n Ensuring that future buildings contribute to the streetscape and neighborhood, rather than serve themselves only.
- n Encourage public awareness of the Capitol Area as a district unique in the State and an asset to its host city.
- n Shaping public space as a critical element of the urban infrastructure.
- n Outlining the major features that constitute the public environment in such a manner as to create a whole that is more than the sum of individual projects.

With a 1996 appropriation, the CAAPB has undertaken this revision of its Comprehensive Plan, along with the zoning rules that ensure orderly development in the Capitol Area.

Goals and Objectives

The goal is to create a Capitol Campus environment that is distinctive in its civic quality and appearance, yet fully connected to the communities that surround it. This will require a broad-based advocacy originating in a vision shared by both City and State. Clear and achievable objectives lay the groundwork for providing that vision.



Neighborhoods provide live/work opportunities in the Capitol Area linked by public transportation to downtown and the region.

The goal of planned development in the Capitol Area is to reinforce the visual pre-eminence of the Capitol Building, maintain the Capitol Campus as a visitor destination, and its component neighborhoods as vibrant urban villages. This Comprehensive Plan calls for a distinctive Capitol Campus that is well integrated and visually cohesive. In doing so, the Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the inherently productive nature of community building and neighborhood interdependence, and seeks to produce a clear direction for a future in tune with Saint Paul's aspirations.

Objectives of Planned Development:

- n Create a compelling vision for future development in the Capitol Area as an integral part of the development of the Capital City.
- n Restore the continuity of urban fabric that has been disrupted by land clearing for urban renewal in the 1950s, the construction of the freeway, and occasional inappropriate developments.
- n Recognize the diversity of the component neighborhoods or areas within the Capitol Area and define the relationship of each to the principal Capitol Campus.
- n Define the urban character, predominant use patterns, and desirable density of development for each subdistrict in the Capitol Area.
- n Identify the opportunities for future location of State government agencies, offices, and parking facilities in the Capitol Area, consistent with the Strategic Plan.
- n Reinforce connections of the Capitol Area to its neighbors, particularly downtown and the Mississippi River.



Green streets linked
to park spaces
unify the campus
and provide a
neighborhood focal
point.

Approach and Concept

This *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area* strives to make the planning intent of the CAAPB explicit. The goals, objectives and guidelines are keyed to plan elements and zoning policies. Work will be focused to specifically address elements that are important to each area.

The Comprehensive Plan is guided by the context of the historical development of the Capitol and the adjacent neighborhoods, *The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies* and *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework*, also referred to as the Framework Plan.

The following principles will facilitate this strategy:

- n Apply campus planning principles within the Capitol Campus and neighborhood planning principles within the Capitol Area neighborhoods (The Capitol Campus refers to the Capitol and the green space and buildings immediately surrounding it).
- n Treat the Capitol Campus as a hub surrounded by a number of urban neighborhoods or portions of neighborhoods. These urban neighborhoods can capitalize on being adjacent to the Capitol Campus, near open spaces, cultural facilities, transportation systems, State services and employment opportunities.
- n Create connections to the Capital City and riverfront by identifying and planning for the Capitol approaches and key visual corridors. The plan includes guidelines for development of these approaches and visual corridors addressing: streetscaping, building uses and relationships at the street level, neighborhood character, and gateway qualities.
- n Encourage a transportation strategy that will promote a strong pedestrian and transit component while providing for the needs of motorists and service traffic.
- n Define the CAAPB's responsibilities in the areas surrounding the campus. Issues include "ownership," roles and responsibilities, partnerships, potential private and public developers and on-going funding mechanisms. The Comprehensive Plan addresses a number of current inadequacies in these areas.

The CAAPB's first responsibility is for planned development within its jurisdictional boundaries. It strives to be cognizant of neighborhoods outside the Capitol Area and is aware of influences of each upon the other. CAAPB staff will communicate with institutions and organizations outside the CAAPB district to avoid conflicting development efforts. Just as there are opportunities for the Capitol Campus to develop in conjunction with the Capitol Area neighborhoods of Capitol Heights,

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Capitol Area planning within the Capitol Campus will be driven by the Capitol and its extensions (an "inside out" approach), while Capitol Area neighborhood planning will be driven by a partnership with the neighborhoods (an "outside in" approach).

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East Frogtown, Sears Block and Fitzgerald Park, there are opportunities for these five subdistricts of the Capitol Area to coordinate with other neighbors (such as the Northeast Quadrant, Mt. Airy, Lafayette Park, etc.) for joint development.

Process

This Comprehensive Plan was developed through extensive contact with government and community representatives to solicit ideas, values and goals for the Capitol Area. Planning workshops provided legislators, State agencies, local government, neighbors, residents and business leaders the opportunity to be involved in the planning process as well as providing guidance to the consultants. Neighborhood groups expressed their planning goals in relation to the Capitol Area and their views on the potential benefits and liabilities of being in the Capitol Area. This process explored the on-going roles of the CAAPB, the Department of Administration, City, District Councils and residents. Participants can be expected to have a vital role in the implementation of planning recommendations.

Organization of the Plan

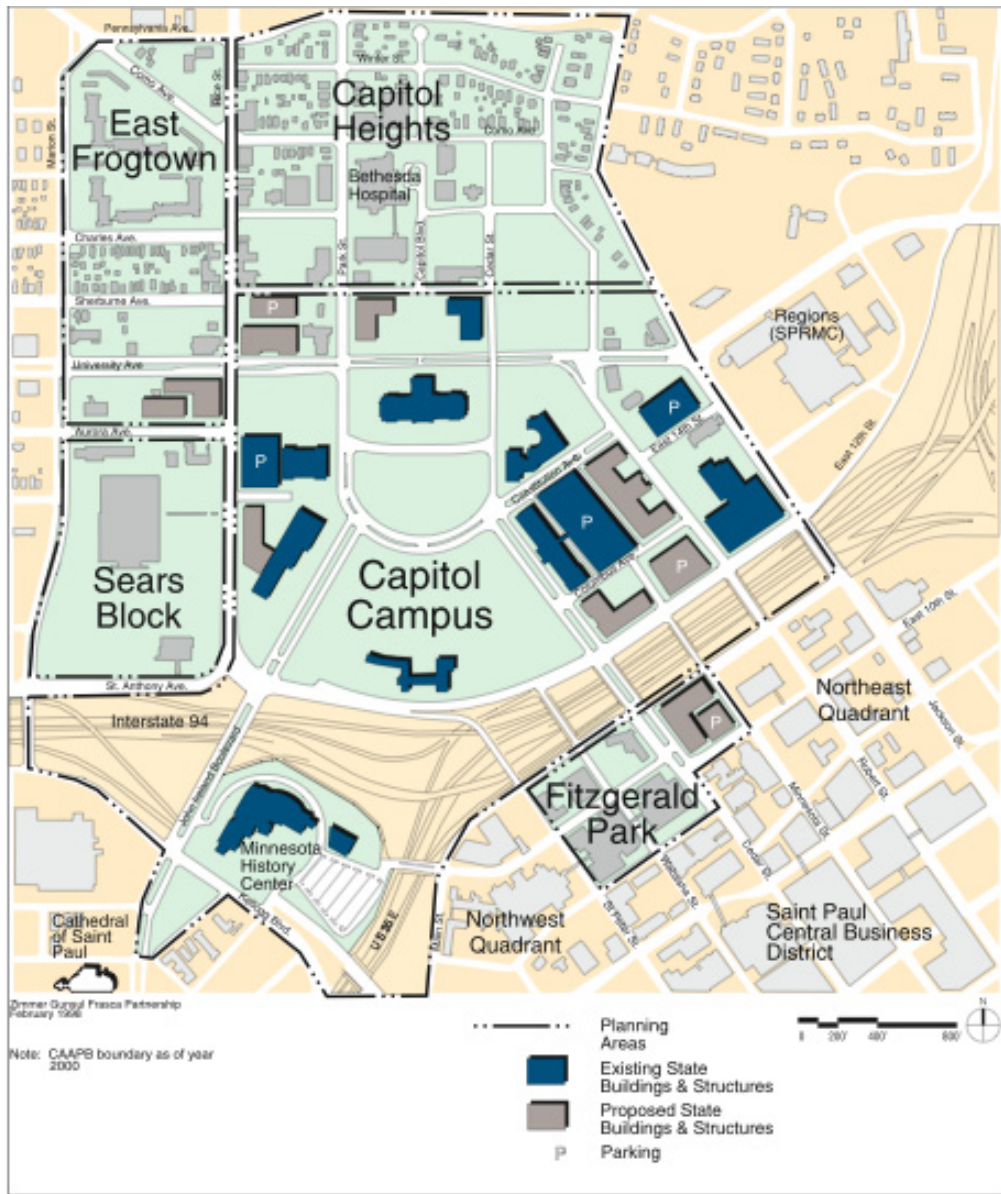
This document begins with a description of the historical development of Saint Paul, the Capital City and its past planning efforts. It then discusses the component parts of the Capitol Campus, Capitol Area Neighborhoods, Transportation issues and Making the Vision a Reality.

Recommendations for action are offered in a separate document entitled *Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*.



The area extending south to West 7th Street is the former intended site for the Labor Interpretive Center (LIC). While currently within the Capitol Area boundary, it will be returned to City jurisdiction in the near future. This piece will therefore not be illustrated in subsequent images of the Capitol Area.

CAAPB Planning Areas



CAAPB Planning Areas distinguish purely residential and mixed-use areas from the area that is exclusively used by the State: the Capitol Campus.

1 **Principal Influences on the Plan**

Historical Development

Mississippi Destination

Saint Paul's historical development as the capital of Minnesota is intimately connected to its relationship with the river. This early dependence on the Mississippi for the embarkation of goods has given way to a more symbolic dependence. Nevertheless, a link with the Mississippi remains embodied in the City's built environment and consciousness. Today, as in earlier times,



the Mississippi provides a significant urban design element, a focus for the Capital City's aspirations, as well as a source from which much of its identity and well-being flow.

The 1893 decision to relocate the Capitol Building marked the first effort in an evolutionary process that has spanned over one hundred years. It has been an on-going endeavor to provide the city of Saint Paul with a civic place in tune with the aspirations of Minnesota's people and their collective vision for the future. It has also been an effort that has brought contemporary economic and political realities into conflict with the desires of those who have championed that vision.



The shift of the city away from dependence on the river as a source of prosperity has not altered the perception of its Capitol as a place of destination. Where the river used to facilitate the exchange of goods, the Capitol now facilitates the exchange of today's most important commodities: ideas and information. The Capitol represents the logical focus for the civic possibilities inherent in those ideas and as such remains an important destination in the minds of Minnesota's people.

This plan should build upon the historical role of Saint Paul as a river city and seat of state government. Cass Gilbert's original design for the Capitol Building approached this purpose with confidence and foresight.

Cass Gilbert's Vision

The unrestrained confidence with which Cass Gilbert proclaimed his challenge to the city stands as testament to his belief that the city's future was to be a legacy tied to greatness. The project's first phase involved the siting, design and construction of the Capitol Building. By the rules of competition for the project, this important first step was taken independently of future considerations concerning the creation of ceremonial civic approaches to the building. Minimal consideration was also given to the creation of an appropriately scaled civic space around the building in which to accommodate large gatherings. Gilbert, recognizing the deficiencies in this

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"We built the State Capitol on the theory that nothing was too good for Minnesota. Let us develop the city on the theory that nothing is too good for Saint Paul."

Capitol architect Cass Gilbert, in remarks to the Saint Paul Municipal Art Association, Saint Paul Dispatch (January 11, 1909)

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approach, attempted to persuade the Board of State Capitol Commissioners to purchase enough property to realign the building in order to create a symmetrical relationship to the existing street grid. This was not to be, and as such, marks the first major instance in which a proposal designed to accommodate an ambitious future vision for the Capitol fell prey to the expediences of a more pragmatic present.

In 1902, Gilbert, recognizing that support from the State for this proposition might not be forthcoming, began to work with the City and various civic groups to raise funds for the development of a Capitol Mall and ceremonial approach. The plan produced from this effort was to be the first of a total of six separate plans introduced between the years 1902 and 1909. These plans give us a sense for what his vision for the Capitol was to be. It is one in which the grounds and approaches to this monumental civic building support its landmark status while at the same time connecting it to other landmarks and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Capitol Area Neighborhoods

Capitol Heights: The Capitol Heights neighborhood lies directly to the north of the Capitol Campus and is entirely within the boundaries of the Capitol Area. The area is bounded by Sherburne Avenue to the south, Pennsylvania Avenue to the north, Jackson Street to the east, and



Capitol Heights can resume its historic role as a strong residential neighborhood.

Rice Street to the west. The distinguishing topographic feature is the hill, cresting to the northeast of the Capitol Building, from which the neighborhood derives much of its character. By 1889 the hilltop along Sherburne Avenue had become home to many of Saint Paul's most prominent citizens. The opulent mansions shared an expansive view of Saint Paul as it grew along the Mississippi. Modest, working class housing made up the bulk of the housing stock then, as it does today.

The prevalent land use in Capitol Heights corresponds to the topographical layout of the land. Today, large institutional buildings occupy the slope of a hill with Bethesda Hospital at its crest, and housing occupies both the slope and lower ground. The land falls abruptly toward Winter and Jackson streets to the north and east.



East Frogtown continues to develop as an active residential community.

East Frogtown: East Frogtown falls within the jurisdiction of the CAAPB to the northwest of the central Capitol Area. It is bounded by Aurora Avenue to the south, Pennsylvania Avenue to the north, Rice Street to the east and Marion Street to the west. This is not a discrete neighborhood, merely the eastern extremity of Frogtown. This neighborhood has historically been characterized as an immigrant community composed of working class families. The residential fabric of the greater Frogtown area is defined by its small building lots and closely-spaced dwelling units. The rail yards and their associated industries to the north, along with Frogtown's churches, Rice Street and University Avenue, have traditionally formed the focus for this community.



The Sears Block is an important site in relation to the Capitol Building.



Fitzgerald Park serves significant religious, cultural and institutional purposes important to urban living.

Sears Block: The Sears Block is bounded by Aurora Avenue to the north, Saint Anthony Avenue to the south, Rice Street to the east, and Marion Street to the west. The Sears Block occupies a comparatively level area west of Rice Street, about 15 feet below the ground level at the Capitol. The land slopes down gently toward the freeway at its south border. Its major arterial streets afford clear views of the Capitol, the Minnesota History Center and the Saint Paul Cathedral. Every one of the highly-accessible and well-situated streets around the Sears Block has an urban development potential that is not fully realized. The Sears Block is an urban renewal district of indeterminate character strategically located between the Capitol Campus and Western Park (site of a former ox cart trail-head used by 19th century fur trappers bound for Manitoba). Neighborhood plans for Western Park include a volleyball court, picnic area, winter skating rink, and a sculpture garden hosting annual exhibits.

Fitzgerald Park: The Fitzgerald Park neighborhood is situated to the southeast and directly across I-94 from the Capitol Campus. This five city-block area falling within the jurisdiction of the CAAPB is bounded by Minnesota Street to the northeast and Saint Peter Street to the southwest. Significant religious, cultural and institutional purposes are served either within or adjacent to this neighborhood. Among these are the Fitzgerald Theater, the Science Museum's Omni Theater, the future State Labor Interpretive Center (in the old Science Museum East Building), the Saint Louis Catholic Church, the Central Presbyterian Church, and Saint Joseph's Hospital. A large middle-income housing complex, Gallery Towers, has 195 condominiums. Other housing in the area includes low income and specialized senior units.

Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies

1993 Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies

The 1993 Strategic Plan incorporates and expands urban design principles set forth in the *1980 - 1990 Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*. The production of this plan involved a close cooperative working relationship between State departments of Administration, Finance and the CAAPB. The twenty-year Strategic Plan addresses not only the location of State facilities, but also the present and future relationship between the Capitol Area and downtown Saint Paul. It has provided much of the background information for decision-making in the Legislative and Executive branches on development and location of new State buildings and leasing strategies. The Strategic Plan is recommended to be thoroughly updated every five years to ensure an ongoing, rigorous and systematic analysis of agency and facility needs, and to identify new opportunities for improving efficiency.

1995 Update

A 1995 supplement to the 1993 Strategic Plan was issued to provide current facility development information reflecting changes in agency needs and economic conditions. Among these changes has been a reassessment of the Revenue Department's facility needs. Revenue, once located in a leased building across the river and effectively isolated from Saint Paul's Central Business District, has now relocated to the Capitol Campus. Additional supplements should be prepared from time to time to ensure that the Strategic Plan continues to provide a flexible and up-to-date framework for decision making. Current recommendations for the siting of new buildings in this Comprehensive Plan are tied to the Strategic Plan.

Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework

A New Plan for the Central City

The *Saint Paul on the Mississippi Development Framework* envisions a city of urban villages. The early history of Saint Paul is, to a large extent, written through the history of the self-contained character of its neighborhoods. Current initiatives would build upon the growing sense of community among those who occupy existing and emerging urban villages.

Lowertown's reinvigorated business and residential district is testimony to the success of an aggressive redevelopment effort. Vitality is being restored to the central city in other successful neighborhoods such as Cathedral Hill, West 7th Street, the West Side, Irvine Park, Dayton's Bluff, Rice Park and Grand Avenue.

The Framework Plan includes reference to the Capitol Area. Each of the four neighborhoods that has been identified for consideration in this updated Comprehensive Plan (Capitol Heights, East Frogtown, Sears Block and Fitzgerald Park) possesses unique characteristics and activities that bolster the viability of the Capitol Area. In reciprocity, the Capitol Campus will provide the civic spaces, along with the attendant public amenities, that are needed to anchor these neighborhoods. The resulting interdependence will enrich the living and working environments in each constituent urban village.

The Ten Principles of the Framework Plan:

- n Evoke a sense of place
- n Restore and establish the unique urban ecology
- n Invest in the public realm
- n Broaden the mix of uses
- n Improve connectivity
- n Ensure that buildings support broader city-building goals
- n Build on existing strengths
- n Preserve and enhance heritage resources
- n Provide a balanced network for movement
- n Foster public safety

Riverfront Connections

In the first half of the 19th century, the City established itself at the highest navigable point of the Mississippi, with neighborhoods developing first on the levees adjacent to the river, later on the bluffs. The flood plains were taken over by industry, and cuts in the bluffs eventually became corridors for trains and automobiles. Much of the industry has been removed from the waterfront, and a mix of new uses is needed.



The Wabasha Corridor Precinct Plan in the Framework Plan represents a significant effort to create a main corridor connecting the Capitol and the Mississippi River. Other urban villages such as Fitzgerald Park, Rice Park and the Central Business District connect directly to this spine, reinforcing their inter-relatedness.

In applying the Framework Plan more widely, the first task is to rediscover and re-use these patterns on an urban scale. The visionary design for the State Capitol as conceived by Cass Gilbert distinctly incorporated the then-emerging downtown center while acknowledging the importance of the river and the Cathedral to Saint Paul. This idea is embraced by the Framework Plan. Unfortunately, the I-94 highway corridor and uncoordinated development has prevented the full realization of Cass Gilbert's vision. It nevertheless remains relevant and continues to serve as the touchstone in the effort to re-establish the relationship between all parts of the City and the river.

*Downtown skyline
in 1912 and 1995.
As the face of the
Capital City sky-
line changes, the
Capitol Building
and the Mississippi
River endure.*

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Capitol Campus

*Rice Street to Jackson Street; History Center and
Freeway to Sherburne Avenue*

Concept

Historic and Civic Architecture

Gilbert's decision to adopt a Renaissance style in his design for the Capitol was not arbitrary. He clearly understood the symbolism of his proposal. Using the related conventions of scale, symmetry, a soaring central dome, and white marble, Gilbert designed a Capitol Building that immediately identifies itself as the center of State government. **Although it may no longer be essential to invoke the past in order to proclaim the present, the civic qualities embodied in Gilbert's design remain relevant and essential.**



The Capitol Campus as Minnesota's 'front yard' continues to provide a place for the community to gather.

Ceremonial Seat of State Government

The symbolic significance of the Capitol Campus to the people of Minnesota cannot be overstated. It represents the State's proud heritage and offers the sense that greater things are yet to be accomplished. As Minnesota's 'front yard,' the Capitol Campus brings people together to play and to celebrate; to meet and get to know their neighbors. It demonstrates its commitment to its citizens as the seat of State government.

Efficient and Accessible Government

Many Minnesotans carry into adulthood cherished memories of a visit to the Capitol. The task is to provide visitors with an environment that rewards their expectations and enhances their experience of State government. A strong sense of arrival at the Capitol Campus from all directions conveys an immediate sense of accessibility. The efficiency with which State buildings support their civic duties and the clarity of organization that makes them accessible are critical components in providing citizens a positive overall experience.

Good Neighbor

Civic buildings on the Capitol Campus constitute a strong physical presence for the State. The physical transition between the Capitol Campus and the neighborhoods represents a symbolic association between the State and its citizens. This relationship reflects the same qualities of stewardship and responsible action that are expected from government.

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The State should view its development efforts as complementary to the greater public realm of the city in which it builds and involve the public in its planning strategies.

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Planning for a more cohesive government center amidst existing neighborhoods offers an opportunity for the overall enhancement of the community. The Capitol Campus clearly plays an important role in the larger urban context. Every development proposal provides an opportunity to form ties to that larger context.

Maintenance

Every planning effort requires provisions for both its implementation and continuing maintenance. Development packages, whether they involve streetscaping, landscaping, building, art or signage should include as part of the criteria for their approval, a maintenance plan and the resources and bodies to administer it. The endurance of a vital and healthy State Capitol requires awareness of present and future conditions through preventive maintenance.

Infrastructure and Energy Conservation

Making the Capitol Campus work better at the small scale adds much to its operating efficiency. Building services, grounds maintenance, security, communications (e-mail and web site), recycle programs and energy conservation are growing priorities for an expanding State complex. The State needs to monitor and evaluate on a continuing basis, energy costs (which include the cost of capital, equipment, installation, maintenance, depreciation and labor) to insure the most beneficial system for heating, cooling and other environmental needs. Additional efficiency can be achieved when State employees live close to the Capitol, and when they take advantage of technology that allows work from the home setting.

Approaches and View Corridors

General

Lines of sight along approaches are important to our visual orientation and comprehension of the Capitol Campus. Building frontages and tree plantings that form continuous street edges help define the approach along a view corridor. These approaches and view corridors are not exclusively inward-looking to the Capitol Building but work in two directions. Many places



These views from Cedar Street illustrate the two-way aspect of view corridors between the Capitol and downtown Saint Paul.

along Capitol Area streets afford unobstructed views of the city skyline. The panoramic view from 12th Street includes parts of downtown, several bridges, the Minnesota History Center and the Saint Paul Cathedral. As an important spine through the city, Wabasha Street also provides numerous opportunities for attractive views. However, few framed views exist of downtown landmarks. The downtown skyline has the potential of anchoring Jackson and Cedar streets, acknowledging the two-way aspect of view corridors between the Capitol and downtown Saint Paul. Protected views such as those from inside a building or under an arcade are additional considerations.

The concept of view corridors linking the Capitol Building with downtown Saint Paul (Cedar Street) and the Summit Hill District (John Ireland Boulevard) was first proposed by Capitol architect Cass Gilbert as early as 1903. John Ireland Boulevard links the Saint Paul Cathedral, the Minnesota History Center and the Department of Transportation with the Capitol. University Avenue, Wabasha Street, Rice Street, Robert Street, Como Avenue, Capitol Boulevard and Aurora Avenue are other important view corridors directing visitors to and from the Capitol. While making sight lines to the Capitol more vivid, it is critical to emphasize the physical linkages that facilitate increased pedestrian and vehicular movement on Capitol approaches.

Also important to Gilbert was the “window to the water” - the view along the north-south axis from the Capitol to the Mississippi River and beyond. This view is now obstructed. In its stead, Cedar and Wabasha streets have become important linkages between the Capitol Campus, Fitzgerald Park and the Mississippi River. The new RiverCenter and arena at West 7th Street and Kellogg Boulevard, site of the original Seven Corners as envisioned by Cass Gilbert, is a significant public space that can capture an impressive view of the Capitol dome. Enhancing these view corridors, which emphasize the importance of the Capitol as a vital landmark within a city of landmarks, continues to be a priority urban design principle in the Comprehensive Plan. The City and State should continue to collaborate on development of Capital City boulevards.

Objective:

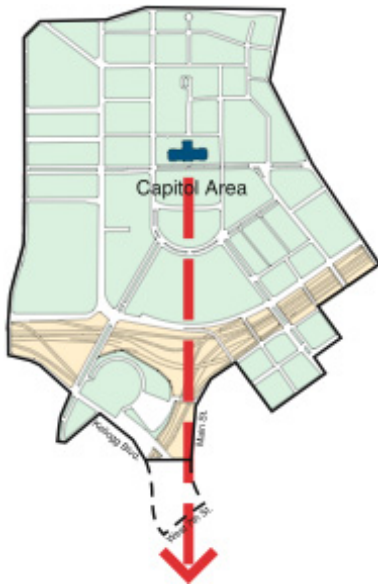
Connect the Capitol to and from downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River.

Guidelines:

- n Seek inspiration from Cass Gilbert's vision.
- n Develop view corridors oriented in two directions.
- n Preserve and design major approach routes to provide and protect visual orientation and attractive views of the Capitol and downtown landmarks.
- n Reinforce Cedar Street as a major visual and pedestrian connection between the Capitol Area and the downtown area.
- n Reinforce Wabasha Street as a connection to a river crossing, the Wabasha Street Bridge.
- n Reinforce Robert Street as a major organizational spine within the Capitol Campus, the visual terminus of Cass Gilbert Park and a primary connector with downtown Saint Paul.
- n Improve John Ireland Boulevard between the Capitol and the Saint Paul Cathedral.
- n Employ setbacks and height restrictions to reinforce the role of the original site of Seven Corners as an important approach and view corridor.
- n Consistent with the 1931 Cass Gilbert Plan for the City, enhance the axial relationship to the river and related vistas such as those from the High Bridge and Smith Avenue south of the river, and the western gateway to downtown Saint Paul at West 7th Street and Kellogg Boulevard.

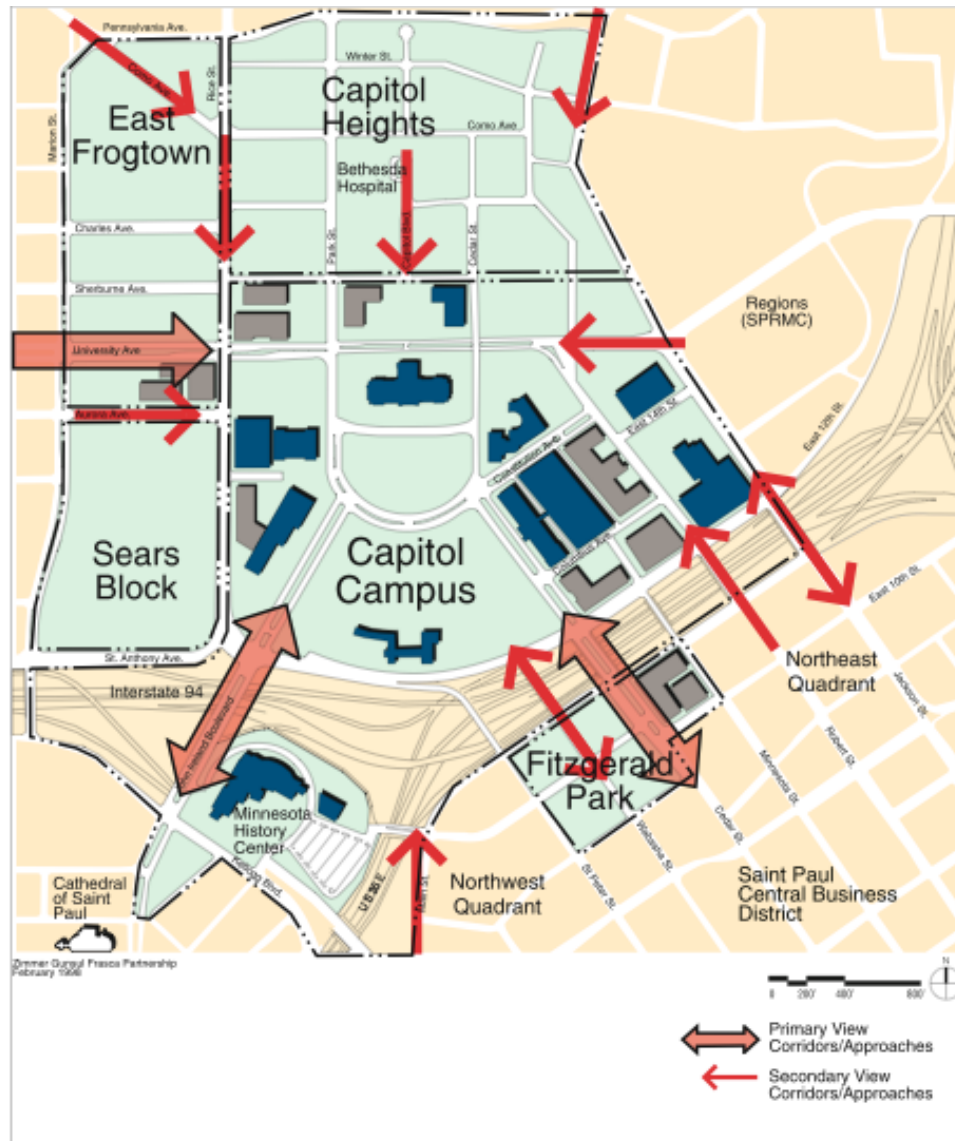


Gilbert's 1931 Plan envisioned a grand approach to the Capitol extending to Seven Corners and across the river to Saint Paul's West Side.



Today's viewsbed: enhance the central axis consistent with Cass Gilber's vision to capture impressive views to the Capitol dome.

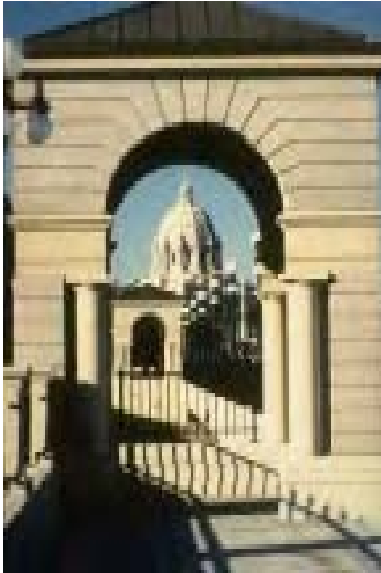
Approaches and View Corridors



This plan shows the major approaches that provide visual orientation of the Capitol and downtown skyline. A view corridor at RiverCenter - Kellogg and West 7th Street remains of Cass Gilbert's vision for Seven Corners.

Gateways

Gateways to the Capitol Campus signify passage into State grounds and are recognized as meaningful points of transition. These transition points should clearly identify themselves as such, with minimum use of signage, and with visual and urban design cues. The development of edge conditions such as gateways at the perimeter of the Capitol Campus need not divide the urban fabric into distinct areas of activity, but rather encourage the vibrant interaction of contrasting and complementary neighborhoods.



The bridgeheads on freeway crossings function effectively as gateways and improve pedestrian connections between the Capitol Campus and downtown Saint Paul.

The bridges spanning I-94 at Cedar Street and John Ireland Boulevard function effectively as gateways. Design treatments conducive to pedestrian movement on these bridges enhances the perception of arrival and facilitates desirable connections between the Capitol Campus and downtown Saint Paul. Encouraging appropriate development up to both edges of the freeway will enhance the gateway effect of bridgeheads and reduce the perceived distance over the freeway. Visitors approaching the Capitol Campus will thus find themselves graciously received and well-oriented.

Objective:

Create distinct and comprehensible gateways into the Capitol Campus.

Guidelines:

- n Use street trees and visual cues to mark gateways into the Capitol, making use of the visual prominence of the Capitol within the Capital City.
- n Enhance the major approaches to the Capitol Area from the south near the bridgeheads before crossing the freeway.
- n Consider potential connections between the east campus and the existing parking lots in the Northeast Quadrant of downtown Saint Paul as points of entry.
- n Define boundary locations and edge conditions serving as gateways between State facilities, institutional complexes, and neighboring residential and retail areas.
- n Employ streetscape or art elements to create gateway settings.
- n Think of key intersections on the periphery of the Capitol Area as possible gateways.

Streetscapes

The reach of the Capitol into neighboring communities and downtown Saint Paul can be further accomplished through investment in streetscapes. Attention to the quality and continuity of details in this most basic feature is an effective way of tying disparate areas together under the unifying theme of a Capital City.



University Avenue can look to its former vitality in 1916 as inspiration to re-establish pedestrian equity on the street.

Objective:

Invest in streetscaping to reinforce physical and visual cues leading to and from the Capitol.

Guidelines:

- n Promote continuity of streetscape features along the length of view corridors.
- n Set standards for paving, landscape, lighting, tree planting, benches, trash receptacles, bus shelters and information systems on view corridors. The locations of such amenities influence the experience of the user.
- n Create median strips planted with large scale deciduous trees except where they would obscure important views.
- n Maintain and prune street trees.
- n Promote uniform pedestrian-scaled street lights with banner supports.
- n Promote special paving treatments at crosswalks entering the Capitol Campus.
- n Widen sidewalks at crosswalk locations to reduce crossing distances and enhance pedestrian equity on the street.

Capitol Views and Vistas



The Mount Airy neighborhood and the Minnesota History Center offer striking views of the Capitol dome.



The view from Smith Avenue is particularly important as a southern extension of the connection between the Capitol and the Mississippi River.

Some of the best views of the Capitol are from such places as the Mount Airy neighborhood and other more distant locations. The new Minnesota History Center provides a visual terminus to Rice Street, which is a vital edge between several neighborhoods, and a framed view of the Capitol dome from inside the Minnesota History Center. The intersections of Como Avenue, Rice Street and Jackson Street with Pennsylvania Avenue are other recognizable viewing points. These examples demonstrate the opportunities to preserve as well as create Capitol views, and should not be forgotten or diminished.

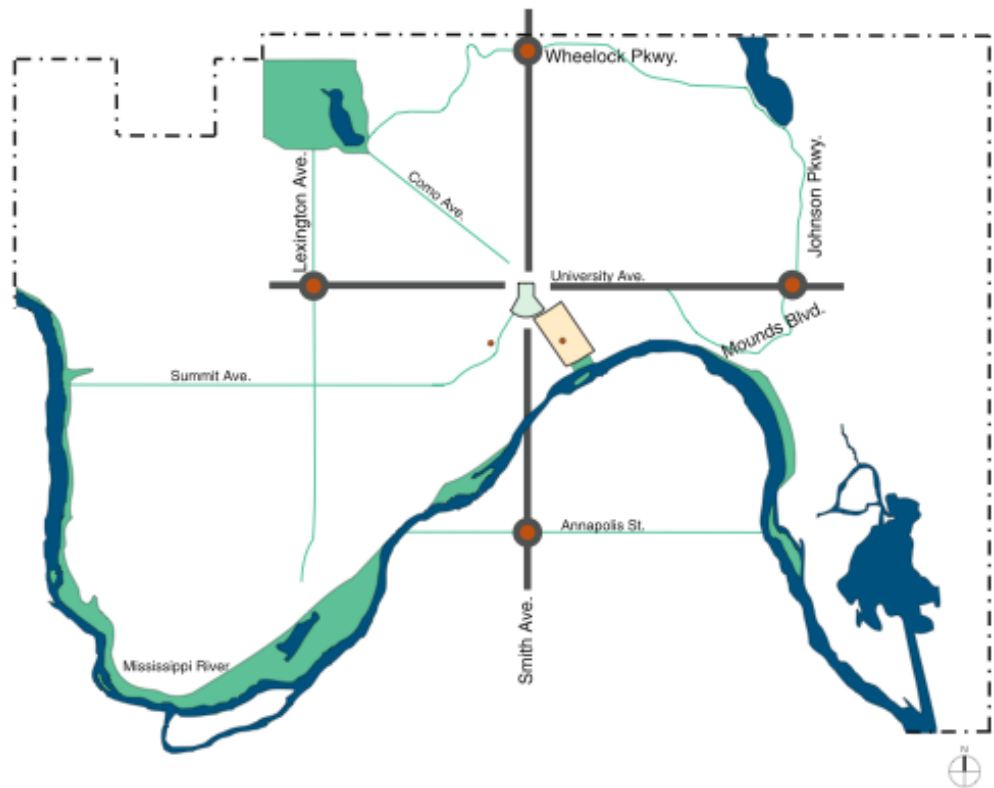
Objective:

Recognize the Capitol Building as the dominant feature and primary visual focal point of the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Preserve and define view axes, including that of the central axis to old Seven Corners and the river bluff.
- n Preserve and enhance distant views to and from the Capitol.
- n Use the Capitol Building as a landmark for orientation within the Capital City.
- n Emphasize views of the Capitol as a terminal point of attraction for vehicular and pedestrian traffic from bridges in the southeast and the southwest.
- n Locate buildings and establish heights that maintain and reinforce the dominance of the Capitol Building when viewed from the campus and the surrounding community.
- n Seek appropriate height restrictions outside of CAAPB jurisdiction to preserve and enhance Capitol views.
- n Restrict the storage of vehicles where they would impinge on important views.
- n Eliminate the few remaining billboards that continue to obstruct some of these key visual corridors.

Capitol Views and Vistas



Distant views are most important from Lexington Avenue, Wheelock Parkway, Mounds Boulevard and Smith Avenue.

Street Level Activity

The vitality of view corridors and the measure of their success depend on the level of pedestrian activity and commerce at street level. Continuous storefront facades provide interest and attraction which draw both motorists and pedestrians along the street. An increase in street level activity encourages the movement of people between the Capitol Campus and its neighborhoods. Active and transparent street frontages also promote pedestrian safety by providing “eyes on the street.”



Amenities such as a sidewalk café zone increase street level activity.

Objective:

Promote pedestrian activity along view corridors.

Guidelines:

- n Promote continuous, attractive pathways along Capitol Campus view corridors.
- n Encourage infill development of uses that attract pedestrians.
- n Recognize the link between high-density developments and increased pedestrian activity.
- n Encourage patronage of retail stores located along view corridors through streetscape enhancements.
- n Encourage a sidewalk café zone in front of restaurant establishments.

Building Frontages

Objective:

Along view corridors, provide interesting and diverse building frontages to engage pedestrians and motorists.

Guidelines:

- n Ensure that the street level of a building fronts adjacent sidewalks.
- n Upgrade deteriorating building frontages along view corridors.
- n Ensure that buildings face outward to the street.
- n Promote street level retail and services, or at a minimum, transparent street walls on all new buildings on key approaches, including new State office buildings in the Capitol Area and Capitol Area neighborhoods.

Capitol Campus Drives and Footpaths



General

Footpaths and Capitol Campus drives that include John Ireland Boulevard, Cedar Street and Constitution Avenue unify the campus, give form to the geometry of the Mall, and provide the primary impression to visitors of the State's seat of government. In addition to providing for the functional movement of vehicles and pedestrians, they are important urban design elements that establish the scale and urban characteristics of the Capitol Campus.

For users of I-94, glimpses of the Capitol may be a first introduction to that destination, or the totality of their experience of Saint Paul as the Capital City. In either case, the quality of the visual impression received is important, and should be thoughtfully presented and preserved.

Streetscapes

The singular experience of a capital city is derived from the relationship between monumental civic architecture and human-scaled streetscapes and connectors. This form of urban design attempts to resolve contrasting scales in a unique place. A streetscape contains pedestrian-scaled elements that, when taken as a whole, effectively address the larger context of their setting. Elements of continuity found in streetscaping features unify disparate parts of the Capitol Campus and reinforce it as a whole. Open spaces of various sizes along campus drives can create intimate settings within the Capitol Campus. They are pausing places, places that nod to human activity. Streetscapes are comprised of building facades, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and street furnishings.



*Footpaths
enhanced by trees
and pedestrian
crossings
strengthen the
campus character
of the Capitol.*

Objective:

Establish design standards for the streetscape to respond to people as well as to place.

Guidelines:

- n Explore ways to make the scale of the Capitol Campus more human, providing enclosure and accessibility.
- n Develop pedestrian paths through the Capitol grounds to strengthen its campus-like character and provide seating for those who wish to rest or enjoy the campus surroundings.
- n Explore the use of sheltered promenades along active building frontages to give pedestrians year-round access throughout the Capitol Area.
- n Plant boulevard streets throughout the Capitol Area.
- n Implement lighting standards on campus drives and footpaths per the *Lighting Design Framework for the Capitol Area, August, 1991*.
- n Improve pedestrian crossings and encourage their use.
- n Explore sites other than Constitution Avenue for staging of buses or redesign Constitution Avenue where it crosses the Mall to allow for short-term parking of buses and media vehicles while lessening the current conflict with pedestrians crossing the street.
- n Improve both pedestrian and vehicular signage.



The north building frontage of the Capitol Building will provide a visual axis to the north extension of the Mall.

Building Frontages

Objective:

Establish design standards for building frontages consistent with the civic architecture of the Capitol Campus.

Guidelines:

- n Incorporate concepts such as symmetry in the facade of buildings to respond to visual axes, formal open spaces, building groupings and major entrances.
- n Emphasize major pedestrian entrances with ceremonial architectural treatments.
- n Prohibit large areas of curtain wall.
- n Prohibit reflective glass surfaces.
- n Require transparency of the street wall at sidewalk level.
- n Use colors and materials consistent with those existing in the area, when they are of high quality.

Landscape Framework

General

The landscaping and development of the Capitol Mall must respond to its location as the seat of government by the people. Development of a series of landscaped public areas on the Capitol Mall would create true civic spaces dedicated to political activity, commemoration, artistic endeavor, recreation and interaction of the people of Minnesota. It would also create a human scaled environment within the vastness of the Capitol Mall.



This plaza on the east side of the Capitol Building links major State buildings as well as provides leisure time seating to pedestrians.

This plan differentiates the Capitol Campus as that part of the Capitol Area which is entirely dominated by civic buildings and spaces. Events at the Capitol Campus such as the Taste of Minnesota and the celebration of Independence Day stimulate community interest but demand resolution of such issues as event parking in the adjoining neighborhoods.

The ground rises toward the Capitol Building from the south and east, then meets the yet steeper hillside of Cass Gilbert Park, which rises to high ground northeast of the Capitol Building. With more dense building groupings, guidelines for the landscaping of this area must necessarily reflect a more urban character than the open space character of the Capitol Mall.

Open Spaces

Public open spaces in the Capitol Area become places of reflection, and at times, lively places of activity. They create a positive image for the City and the State, and enhance the value and economic viability of their surroundings. Such places require much more than careful design and execution; they require ongoing commitment, reevaluation and diligent management. The civic pride engendered by successful open spaces can benefit neighboring communities, producing positive initiatives for the provision of a city-wide network of open spaces.

v

*Thoughtfully conceived and well-managed open spaces
are key civic features of gracious cities.*

v

Open spaces can provide a focus and orientation for buildings and other features around them. Streets and pathways that give access to open spaces should be consciously designed as extensions of them into the surrounding built environment.



With careful design and placement, open spaces can also be distinct places that offer views of the Capitol dome. The Capitol then becomes an integral component of the identity of these open spaces and links them in this common feature.



The steep hillside of Cass Gilbert Park once had a stronger physical and visual connection from University Avenue and Robert Street. It can do so again with appropriate planning efforts.

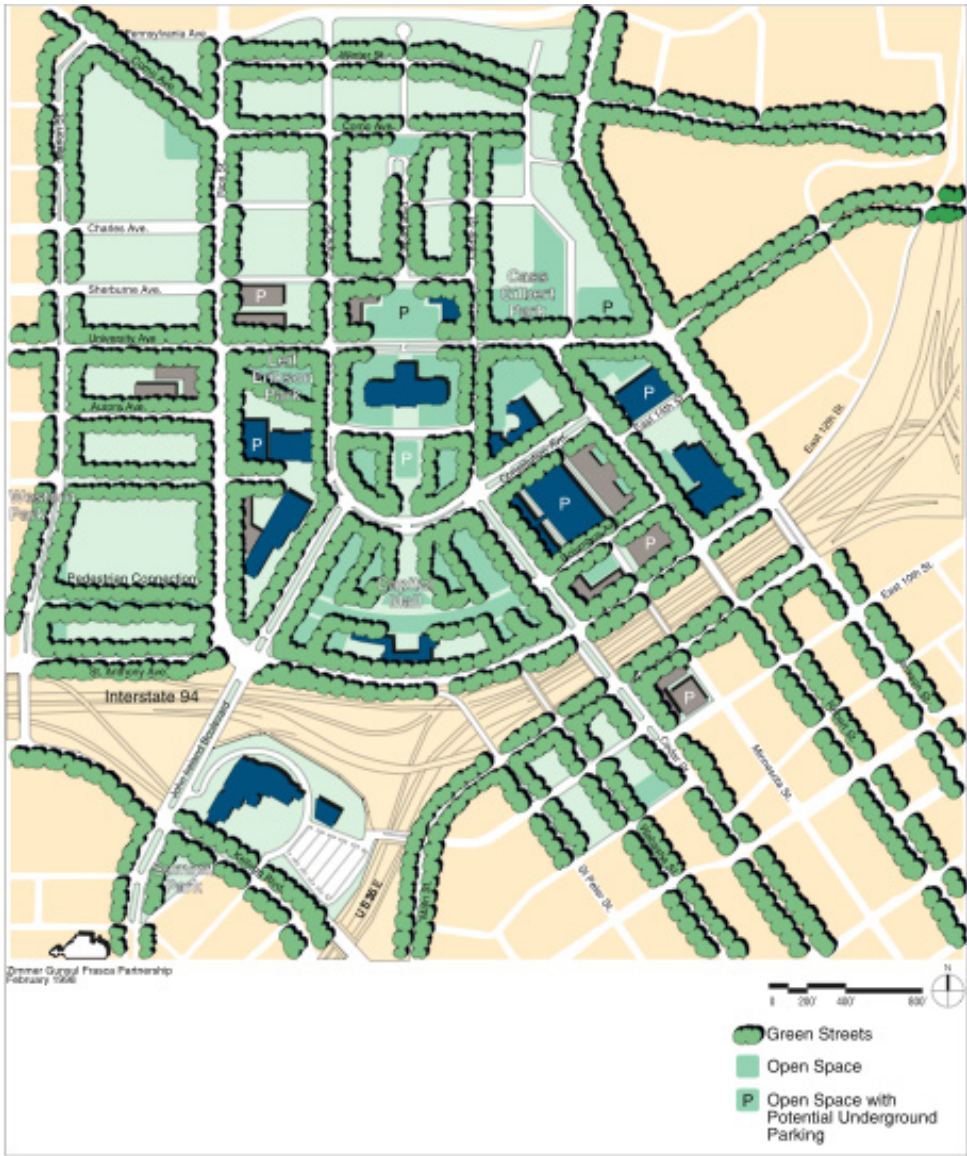
Objective:

Set the highest standards for civic space, providing for the protection, development and enhancement of the public open space essential to the beauty of the Capitol Campus.

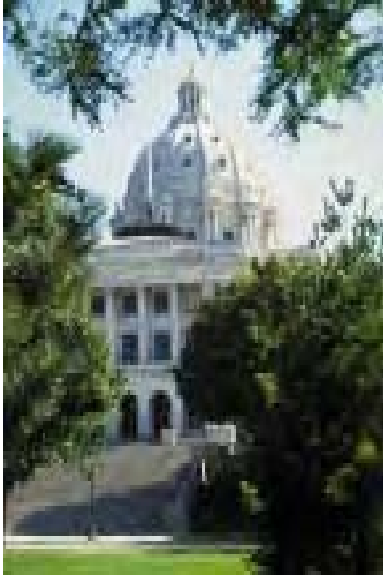
Guidelines:

- n Maintain the dignity of open spaces in the landscape framework.
- n Promote endowments for the maintenance of open spaces and landscaping.
- n Extend the natural and historic landscape established by Saint Paul's extensive parkways and boulevards through the Capitol Area.
- n Plant trees selectively in the Capitol Campus to complement the natural landscape of the surrounding bluff tops and neighborhoods.
- n Reinforce the use of the Mall as an urban park (like the Mall in Washington, DC) .
- n Configure the Capitol Mall to reconcile the meeting of two of the city's street grids.
- n Preserve existing open space on the Capitol Campus that work together to create a network of people-oriented spaces radiating from the Capitol.
- n Locate parks on axis with street ends or intersections where possible.
- n Develop terraced lawns along Cedar Street to create small, intimate public spaces.
- n Encourage landscape elements that allude to Minnesota's uniqueness, especially symbols of Minnesota heritage such as the state tree, plant, grain and fish.
- n Promote public use, cultural and recreational programming of all types. Designate appropriate activities for the Mall.
- n Provide linkages to major State buildings, plazas and parking, for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles.
- n Design connecting streets and pathways as extensions of open spaces, reflecting a quality appropriate to the public realm at the State Capitol.
- n Provide public amenities that encourage people to linger.
- n Provide seating such as low walls or steps in places where people may choose to stay, observe or participate in public outdoor activities.
- n Monitor security of Capitol Area parks.
- n Soften the freeway edge and frame freeway views of the Capitol.
- n Improve Summit Park between the Cathedral and Capitol as a gateway park, perhaps with transfer of land from the City to State.
- n Redevelop Cass Gilbert Park and its overlook.
- n Follow the 1994 Framework for the Capitol Mall.

Landscape Framework



The Landscape Framework links open spaces together in a campus-like character.



*The civic qualities
of the Capitol
Campus are con-
veyed by landscape
as well as architec-
ture.*

Building Foundation Landscaping

Plantings at building edges and the open spaces to which they contribute are important components of the Landscape Framework, helping to ground buildings visually into the overall landscape.

Objective:

Provide a dignified setting for Capitol Area buildings that will enhance their relationship to the civic landscape and the Capitol.

Guidelines:

- n Allow for the proper spatial and functional relationship between park areas and the surrounding buildings.
- n Define future development around the Capitol Building to include coherent open spaces, linked to the Capitol.



This plan strives to diminish the negative influence of surface parking lots on the appearance of the Capitol Area.

Parking Lots

Landscaping can screen and enrich expanses of pavement and stored vehicles. Existing parking areas should be effectively screened from the Capitol Campus and frame views towards it, without compromising safety.

Objective:

Make parking lots safe and parked vehicles inconspicuous, following guidelines as generated and documented by the CAAPB.

Guidelines:

- n Reduce surface parking within the Capitol Campus.
- n Promote opportunities for Capitol-related commuter and visitor parking outside the Capitol Campus.
- n Ensure that landscaping and lighting create safe parking lot environments during all hours.
- n Reduce the demand for parking within the Capitol Area by State and other employees by supporting the Department of Administration's transportation management plan, as recommended by the Strategic Plan.
- n Improve transit access to the Capitol Area.
- n Reinforce the design of all area parking lots using the *CAAPB Parking Area Design Framework (1991)* and any amendments.

Buildings

General

Buildings housing the offices of government should strive to create an environment rich in tradition, inspirational for those who work in them and memorable to those who visit them. Accomplishing this requires elevated civic aspirations, clarity of vision and thoughtful planning. Each building is significant in how it contributes to or detracts from this effort. The Capitol Building is the centerpiece that sets both the tone and standard for all buildings around it.



Preservation, Renovation, and Redevelopment Planning

Preservation of the Capitol Building is a central priority for the CAAPB. Efforts to preserve and maintain its purpose and appearance are being undertaken. Prioritization of long-term concerns has been accomplished through the development of a strategic plan for projects to be completed in the future. It is recommended that phased renovations to the Capitol Building be linked and coordinated with State agency development elsewhere in the Capitol Area.

Development efforts in the east campus must be in keeping with the civic character of the Capitol Campus and also fulfill an urban role with its immediate neighbors in Saint Paul.

Objective:

Preserve and enhance the dignity, beauty and architectural integrity of the Capitol and other governmental buildings in the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Develop programs to ensure ongoing maintenance of building structure and appearance, emphasizing preventive maintenance.
- n Prohibit demolition or development that will diminish or obstruct views of significant buildings and their sites in the Capitol Area.
- n Combine governmental and neighborhood community-based building needs in order to better define the Capitol Campus and foster linkages with the downtown area.
- n Ensure that the remodeling of existing buildings is consistent in scale, materials, quality and execution with the Capitol and its neighbors.
- n Promote access to and from the freeway.
- n Relate development to the adjacent street grids, neighborhood and districts.

Potential Building Uses

Rapid changes in today's government and workplace demand flexibility in a building's use over the course of its lifetime. However, proposed government buildings should continue to reflect the symbolic themes associated with State and citizenry. Broad rather than user-specific assignments of buildings and site locations will enable planners and designers to continue to respond to changing needs in their design proposals.

There is significant opportunity in the east campus to include with State offices other uses that will benefit State employees as well as neighboring communities, institutions and downtown Saint Paul. Proximity to local and regional transportation will promote the potential for such favorable public-private partnerships. Proposals for development in this area will require initiative by the State.

Objective:

Explore opportunities for joint developments that support public functions as well as for meeting the needs of the State.

Guidelines:

- n Maintain space for childcare services in the Capitol Area.
- n Promote facilities for services that State employees would patronize close to the Capitol Area and linked by transit shuttle buses.
- n Recognize space needs for cultural and recreational purposes when planning State buildings.
- n Integrate commercial services for agencies and employees along streets heavily used by pedestrians.
- n Share resources and assembly space between buildings in close proximity to each other.

Potential Development Sites

Among the most compelling arguments for the consolidation of State offices in new or existing buildings in and around the Capitol Area are:

- increased contact between legislative, judicial and executive branches of government;
- easy access to a comprehensive range of governmental services for local and State users;
- shared amenities;
- overhead cost efficiencies associated with proximity.



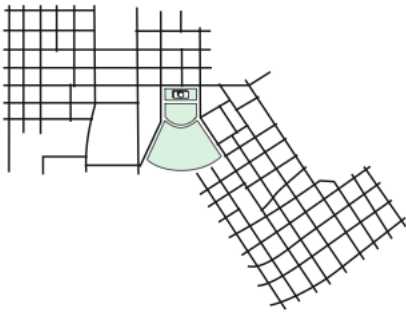
Consolidation of State offices in the Capitol Area also increases the ability to develop a comprehensive traffic management program for State employees that will lead to reduced traffic, air pollution and parking structure costs. These are among the conclusions reached in *The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies*, which also recognizes the value of development of State agencies elsewhere in central Saint Paul.

Potential building sites warrant a density of development consistent with the prevailing or planned civic and urban context. Important considerations include the definition of streetscape, building massing that reinforces the sense

Development of vacant sites on both sides of the freeway will be necessary to repair the urban fabric.

of the existing terrain, establishment of a core area within the district, and integration of open space. The flexibility of a site to accommodate offices of varying types and sizes is particularly valuable.

Building over the freeway, which has been done in other cities, is costly and limits views and orientation of motorists. In the Capitol Area, an alternative concept was developed that treats the freeway as a river, bridging it with architecturally notable structures.



Capitol Area and Capital City planning boards share a responsibility to recognize and respond to the meeting of two of the city's street grids.

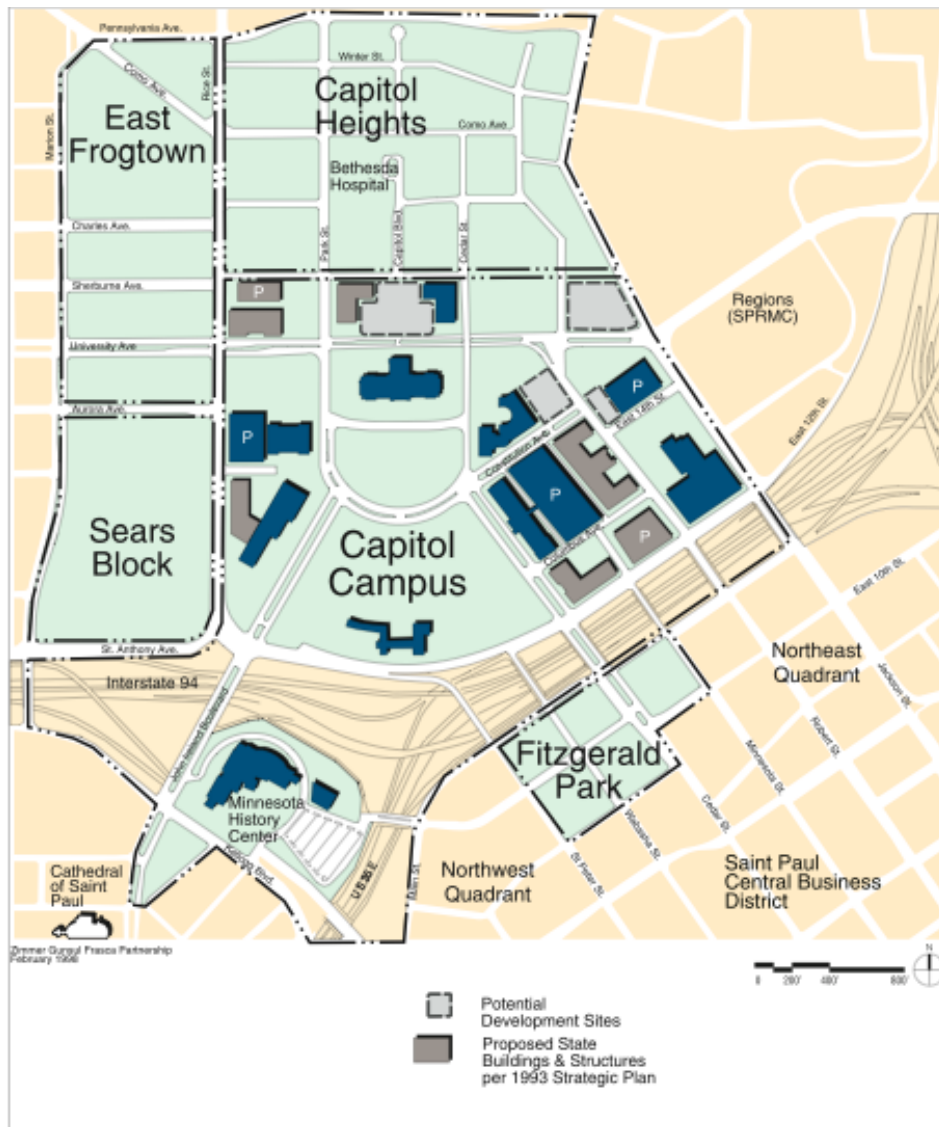
Objective:

Support the concept of civic design and a cohesive Capitol Campus in the siting of buildings.

Guidelines:

- n Accommodate agency needs in the Capitol Area and Capital City for a balanced approach that unites the Capitol with the City.
- n Build future buildings that directly serve the Legislature, Judiciary, Executive and elected policy-makers near the Capitol Building.
- n Site State buildings for convenient access by citizens, located near mass transportation systems, and grouped in such a manner that ride-sharing programs can be instated. This is critical for social service agencies.
- n Locate facilities with limited need for public access on sites that are least prominent.
- n Redevelop under-utilized surface parking lots on the periphery of the Capitol Campus for new State office buildings and civic spaces, or consolidate when possible into ramps or other structured parking.
- n Relate development to the adjacent street grids, neighborhoods and districts to reconcile the meeting of two of the city's grids in the east campus.
- n Promote infill on those blocks immediately surrounding the freeway.

Capitol Campus Potential Development Sites



This plan shows potential development sites on the Capitol Campus. The east campus has much development potential.

Architectural Design Criteria

In order to ensure consistent and appropriate quality in new and remodeled buildings in the Capitol Area, a set of architectural design criteria should be adhered to. These will also provide CAAPB members with a uniform basis for evaluating the suitability of proposed building designs. The CAAPB should also maintain a working relationship with design-build teams to ensure that Capitol Area guidelines are not compromised by the need for increased efficiency in construction.

The heights of existing buildings near the Capitol follow the contours of the hill as it rises to the Capitol. This pattern preserves the image of the Capitol on the hill and should be maintained and encouraged.

Objective:

Enhance the design quality of all Capitol Area architecture to strengthen the image of the State Capitol.

Guidelines:

- n Create civic architecture through appropriate design, quality materials and creative use of color. Building composition and detailing should be consistent with the civic qualities of the Capitol Campus.
- n Reflect the ordering system (base, middle and top) of the Capitol Building in new construction.
- n Be responsive to the scale of the surroundings in the scale and massing of buildings.
- n Maintain building height restrictions to protect the visibility of the Capitol.
- n Develop building heights to follow the contour of the hill and step up toward the Capitol.
- n Group buildings around civic spaces and boulevards.
- n Locate new buildings to form edges of open spaces and streets.
- n Emphasize major pedestrian entrances with ceremonial architectural treatments.
- n Design facilities that are adaptable to changing needs.
- n Design for natural light into lower-level courtyards and provide weather-protection.
- n Provide special architectural features at corners and visual axes.
- n Orient entries to public open space.
- n Where buildings front sidewalks, encourage transparency to provide pedestrian orientation.
- n Maintain design quality through continued use of statutorily required design competitions conducted according to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) rules and CAAPB criteria.

Monuments and Public Art

General

Public art enriches the built environment and can improve our understanding of a place and its meaning in ways that buildings, landscape and infrastructure do not. Monuments belong to a particular category of commemorative public art that convey the values of a community. They tell the story of where a place has been and where it hopes to go. There may be opportunities for public art on the Capitol Campus to be integrated with public art in the Capitol Area neighborhoods.



Leif Erikson's monument may be appreciated in the context of the Capitol dome and as the park centerpiece.

Public art in Saint Paul has been supported by the civic commitment and private generosity of its citizens. The CAAPB's long-term policy of developing the Capitol Mall as a public park has produced memorials of significant civic importance in the last few years. The continuation of both State and private funding for the implementation and maintenance of public art is critical to future efforts. However, enthusiasm for the installation of commemorative works should be tempered with the primacy of maintaining the dignity of the Capitol Mall.

Mall

Objective:

Honor Minnesota's history with appropriate siting of selective works of art on the Capitol Mall or elsewhere in the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Maintain the dignity of existing works of art and memorials.
- n Secure endowments for each new and existing monument and public art installation to pay for maintenance.
- n Exercise discretion and restraint in authorizing additional artworks and monuments in the Capitol Mall. Discourage the development of more memorials.
- n Evaluate opportunities for further investment in public works of art based on their ability to enhance public spaces.
- n Encourage commissioning of art works specific to the indoor or outdoor sites that they are to occupy.
- n Require that future monuments are organized in an array of self-contained but related pieces.
- n Integrate outdoor art and monuments into the landscape as visual elements of its framework.
- n Provide an opportunity for urban design composition, establishing relationships with existing axes, vistas, entry points, and landmarks.
- n Plan the location of monuments and works of art.
- n Encourage more compatibility in public art.
- n Develop public art consistent with organizing principles and policies as adopted by the CAAPB, insuring that the CAAPB is more actively involved.

Streets and Boulevards

The significance of streets as principal approaches to the Capitol, or as elements of orientation within the Capitol Area, can be enhanced with judicious placement of public art.

Objective:

Increase the emphasis on expanding the Capitol Area's monumental nature beyond the Mall into other areas of the Capital City, especially along boulevard axes and visual corridors.

Guidelines:

- n Ensure that each piece is appropriate to its setting.
- n Promote public art works along major approaches to or visible from the Capitol Building to reinforce view axes and to facilitate the orientation of pedestrians and motorists.
- n Use landscaping to emphasize axes and view corridors.
- n Strengthen links between the Capitol and the river along the axis defined by Capitol Boulevard and Wabasha Street.

Parks, Squares and Plazas

Use public art with discrimination to distinguish the identity of parks, squares and public plazas.

Objective:

Promote identity and uniqueness of open spaces with public and commemorative art.

Guidelines:

- n Encourage a variety of integral designs, such as landscape features, that can confer a distinct identity on the place.
- n Program temporary art installations in parks, squares and plazas, or along John Ireland Boulevard as a connection to the neighborhood park west of Marion Street now serving the same function.
- n Encourage public and private patronage of art works in publicly accessible open spaces.
- n Encourage the creation of parks and plazas designed by a collaboration of artists.
- n Locate art works to orient visitors within open spaces.

Buildings

Public art has always been an important component of civic architecture. However, it must be consistent with the character of the building, and the scale and use of the specific space it is to adorn.

Objective:

Plan buildings with provisions for public and commemorative art.

Guidelines:

- n Memorialize significant persons and events by renaming existing features or buildings as an alternative to adding monuments (examples are the Court of Honor, Centennial Building and Veterans Service Building) .
- n Integrate art in the design process of new construction.
- n Commission works of art for specific locations in new and existing buildings. These may be commemorative pieces.

Signs and Visitor Information

General

The impressions created by signage and visitor information influence the overall experience of visitors to the Capitol Campus. Clarity of signs is critical. Well-integrated signage promotes the image of the Capitol Campus as a destination. Refer to the draft *Minnesota State Capitol Area Schematic Sign Design Manual, 1994*.

Objective:

Provide clarity in directions to, and the identity of Capitol Campus features.

Guidelines:

- n Use clear, distinctive and consistent signage graphics.
- n Eliminate unnecessary, confusing or inappropriate signs.
- n Size signs and lettering to be legible yet discreet.
- n Coordinate signage design and placement with outdoor lighting to ensure legibility after dark.
- n Respond to both automobile and pedestrian sign-reading requirements.
- n Encourage cooperation of public and private agencies to use standard iconography on all signage.
- n Locate signs consistently, so that visitors can anticipate where to find them.



Directional Signage

Directional signage is primarily for the benefit of visitors who are unfamiliar with the Capitol Area. It should therefore favor destinations such as visitor parking, information points, etc.

Objective:

Direct visitors to the Capitol and other destinations.

Guidelines:

- n Deploy a signage system in coordination with City and State roadway agencies.
- n Clarify visitor parking locations and access routes.
- n Identify destinations and routes to attractions elsewhere in the Capitol Area and Capital City.

Signage and visitor information should reinforce, not overpower the visible presence of the Capitol Building in the landscape.

Identity Signage

Objective:

Clearly identify Capitol buildings and grounds.

Guidelines:

- n Use clear and consistent graphics throughout the Capitol Area.
- n Clearly identify agencies at single-tenant and multi-tenant buildings.
- n Be consistent in the locations of identity signage.
- n Encourage transit services to develop 'Capitol Routes.'

Interpretive Signage

Objective:

Maximize the education value to visitors, especially the young.

Guidelines:

- n Tell a relevant story through interpretive signage and exhibits.
- n Promote public and private school visitor programs.
- n Use signage in conjunction with public art possibilities.
- n Develop a guide sign program for walking tours both on and off campus.
- n Promote summer docent programs.
- n Make explanatory text concise, to-the-point and easy to read.

Visitor Center

Objective:

Extend a welcome to Capitol Campus visitors and enhance the quality of their visit by providing helpful information.

Guidelines:

- n Provide a Visitor Center that is visible, accessible and of a design that is compatible with the Capitol Mall. Emphasize proximity to freeway access, and clear views to the Capitol and key landmarks of downtown Saint Paul.
- n Provide remote access via the Internet and other means.

3

Capitol Area Neighborhoods

Capitol Heights, East Frogtown, Sears Block and Fitzgerald Park

Concept

Urban Villages

Frogtown is a neighborhood that includes the full range of urban activities: housing, employment, retail and recreational facilities. This degree of autonomy within the city has earned such neighborhoods the title of ‘urban village.’ Other neighborhoods adjoining the Capitol Area have the potential to develop the mix of uses necessary to an urban village, and in anticipation of that, each has been termed an urban village consistent with the City of Saint Paul’s terminology in the Framework Plan.



Irvine Park is a neighborhood that has successfully embraced a full range of urban activities.

Capitol as a Hub for Urban Villages

The Capitol Area urban villages have physical, visual and activity-related connections to the Capitol Campus. The development of parks and linkages contributes to interaction between the Capitol Campus, Capitol Area and Saint Paul urban villages. The resulting focus on the Capitol Campus as a hub and destination will increase the vitality and enjoyment of the surrounding neighborhoods while promoting an increased sense of safety and security for both residents and visitors.

Capitol Area Neighborhood Image

The Capitol Campus and its neighborhoods comprise a cohesive and interactive set of adjacent urban districts. The desirable characteristics of adjacency are created through observable continuities between distinctive areas. This is to be done through the promotion of mixed-use, low-rise, moderate-density development with owner-occupied housing and service retail that supports the local community and strengthens neighborhood image. Irvine Park and Grand Avenue are local examples of successful neighborhoods of this type.

Unique Neighborhood Identity

The neighborhoods adjacent to the Capitol Campus are unique within the broader system of urban villages in Saint Paul. The distinct character of each neighborhood is, in part, a response to particular topographies and developmental histories that have created the existing patterns of use. Each neighborhood will further enhance its identity through urban strategies that also address its holistic structure within the city. Capitol Area neighborhoods will incorporate public open space, a strong core of their own, and will configure their edges to welcome incoming visitors while orienting those who are departing.

Neighborhood planning areas have been identified as follows:

- n Capitol Heights (area north of the Capitol)
- n East Frogtown (area northwest of the Capitol)
- n Sears Block (area west of the Capitol)
- n Fitzgerald Park (area south of the Capitol)

Remaining areas between Sherburne Avenue and the freeway, Rice and Jackson streets are designated as the Capitol Campus.



Winter Street in Capitol Heights has an intimate neighborhood scale that is attractive to residents and visitors.



This lovely home in East Frogtown demonstrates the desirability of improving housing conditions in the area.

Capitol Heights

Although the residential area on the north face of the hill has little visual connection with the Capitol, its proximity to the Capitol Campus makes it a desirable model in-city neighborhood that could provide housing alternatives for State employees. New development in Capitol Heights would complement the existing low and moderate income housing in the area and reduce commuter trips to the city. The new vision for Capitol Heights is of an active and diverse residential population that makes use of retail, employment and service amenities found in the Capitol Area.

East Frogtown

East Frogtown is a sub-district of the larger Frogtown community. It is bounded by Marion and Rice streets and Pennsylvania and University avenues. East Frogtown faces challenges in establishing a core identity of its own. Its high population density creates a strong local demand for commercial services, particularly along Rice Street. This adjacent retail activity will strengthen East Frogtown's identity as a vibrant neighborhood. Public assistance has enabled infill and rehabilitation of houses and some commercial properties in East Frogtown. Rental rehabilitation programs are addressing the deterioration of rental housing and multifamily units in the area. The new vision for East Frogtown is of an active urban village that draws its resources from Rice Street and University Avenue.



The Sears Block has unfulfilled potential as a center of urban living.



Cultural uses in Fitzgerald Park provide a dignified and appropriate extension of the Capitol Campus across the freeway.

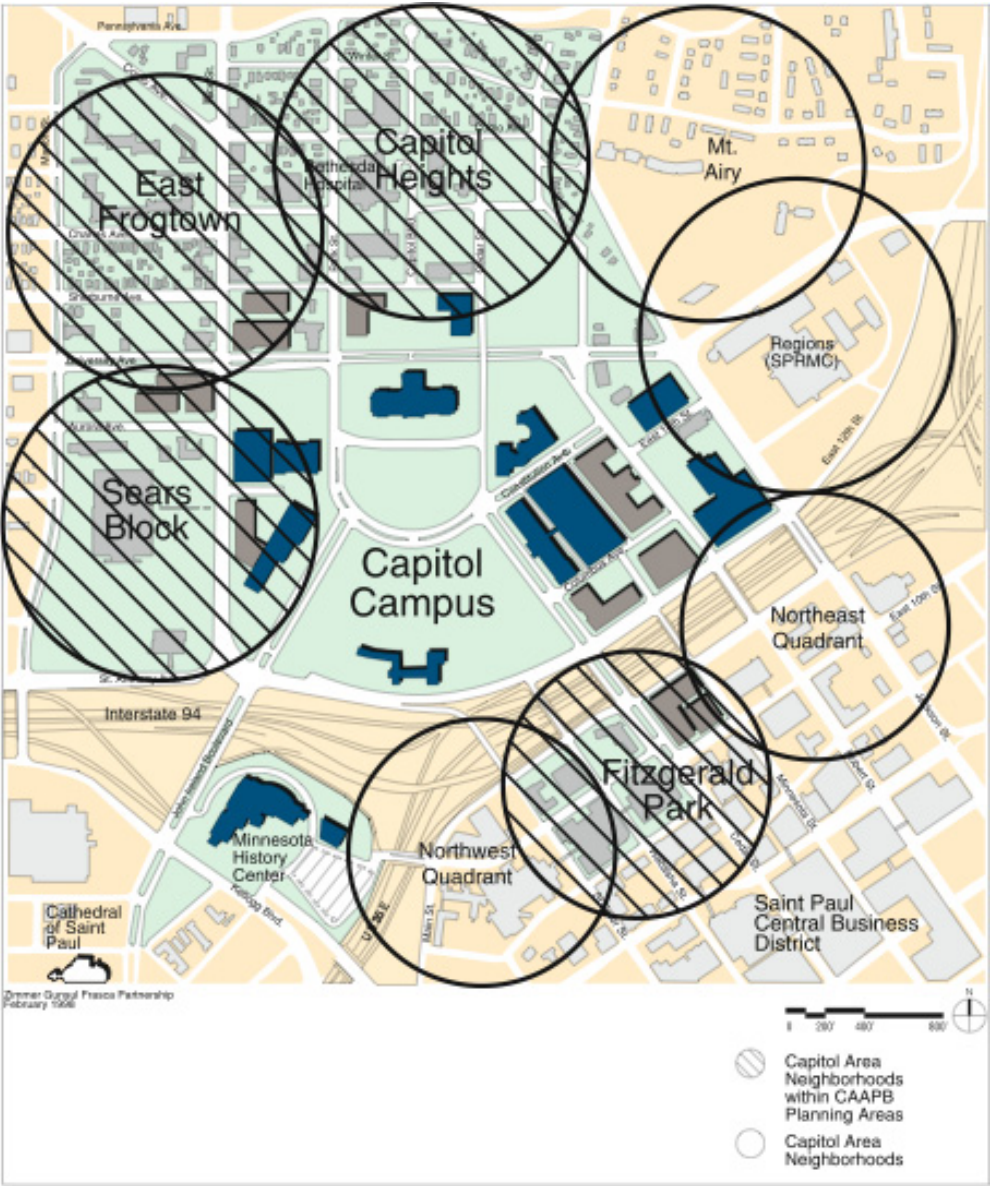
Sears Block

The future of the Sears Block is important in the overall vision of the Capitol Area. In order to bring the area in tune with the intimate spirit of Saint Paul's neighborhoods, greater architectural integrity and small-scaled buildings should be introduced on this block. The Sears store itself, an important asset to the community, could rebuild in a more urban complex on the same site if desired. A variety of mixed-uses, including residential, office, State buildings and green spaces will fill out the rest of the block. The Sears Block will become a new and vital center of urban living.

Fitzgerald Park

Fitzgerald Park constitutes the surviving green space reminiscent of Gilbert's design for a public garden to span between Wabasha and Cedar streets, strengthening the connection between the Capitol Building and the river. The block south of the Capitol Square site and west of Cedar Street has been identified as a location for a major cultural facility. This facility would connect the Capitol Area with downtown Saint Paul even more firmly than does the Minnesota History Center on John Ireland Boulevard. As the transition between the Central Business District and the Capitol Campus, Fitzgerald Park is an important gateway. Its development must be compatible with these two districts, while reflecting the civic qualities of the Capitol Campus. The new vision for Fitzgerald Park is a high quality residential and cultural district centered on an urban park and convenient to downtown amenities and major employers.

Capitol Area Neighborhoods



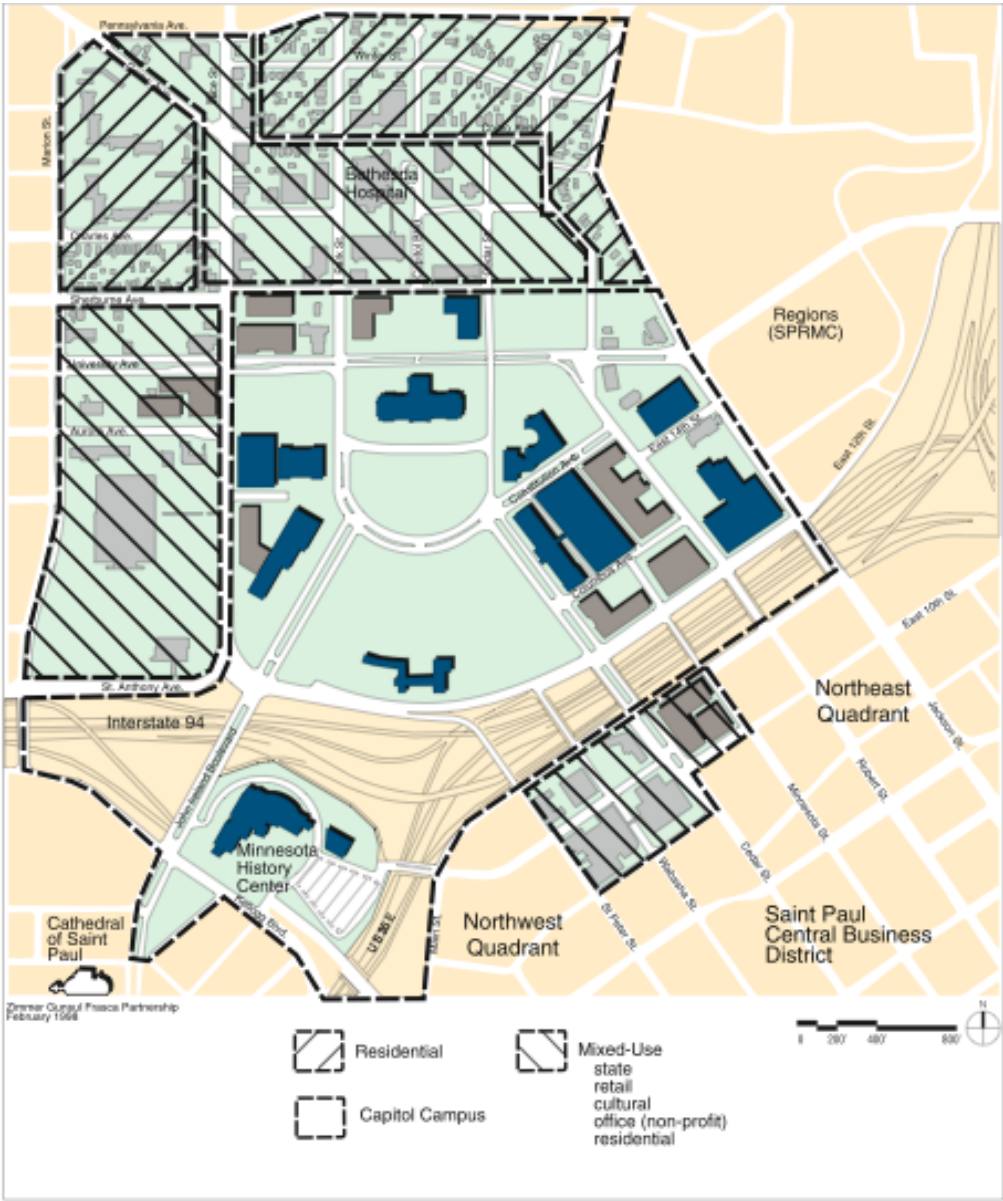
This plan shows the relationship of Capitol Area neighborhoods around the open expanse of the Capitol Campus.

Proposed Land Uses

The concept of land-use separation in Saint Paul was originally employed to combat the encroachment of industrial uses into residential areas. This threat has disappeared, and mixed-uses are now recognized as distinct advantages to the vitality of a neighborhood. Opportunities exist to re-introduce a healthier mix of uses, such as commercial and cultural, to revitalize communities that have become lethargic or as a single use has become exclusive. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the changing political, industrial, commercial and demographic make-up of Saint Paul requires the reformulation of its zoning codes and planning approaches. Implementation of planning guidelines begins this renewal process.

In the past, inclusion within the Capitol Area boundary has carried with it the implied threat of acquisition by the State for redevelopment. This perception has led to deferred maintenance and in some cases, blight of properties that merit improvement. The CAAPB, therefore, wishes to clarify future State development intentions, and identify those areas which will remain unaffected. In order to clarify CAAPB boundaries and keep area residents informed of the State's visions for development, the Capitol Area has been differentiated into proposed area uses including residential, State, and mixed-use (State, retail, cultural, non-profit office, and residential). Within the Capitol Area, potential development sites for State agencies will be restricted to the grounds of the Capitol Campus and designated mixed-use areas: one north of Sherburne Avenue and south of Pennsylvania Avenue; another north of Saint Anthony Avenue and south of Sherburne Avenue (including the Sears Block); and a third in the Fitzgerald Park neighborhood.

Proposed Land Uses



This plan restricts potential development sites for State agencies to the Capitol Campus and Mixed-Use areas, reaffirming the preservation of residential neighborhoods. Special regulations concerning certain streets within Mixed-Use areas are determined according to their roles as commercial or residential streets. The area extending south to West 7th Street (not shown) is currently designated as a Mixed-Use area.

Neighborhood Residential Streets

General

Well-planned neighborhood streets knit a community together and offer a forum for the expression of community values and commitments. Residential streets are more locally oriented than commercial streets. Good residential streets promote healthy communities and contribute to an increased quality of life. In the Capital Heights neighborhood, Winter Street illustrates the appeal of a well-maintained residential street for living and pedestrian connections. Maintaining the momentum of neighborhood street improvements and revitalization encourages adjoining communities to similar action.

Objective:

Reinvest in neighborhood residential streets to build stronger communities.

Guidelines:

- n Strengthen community leadership and financial resources.
- n Encourage people to live in adjacent neighborhoods and walk to work in the Capitol Campus.
- n Discourage through traffic on residential streets.
- n Provide guidance on the design of successful neighborhood residential streets.



Adjust the scale of selected trees, median widths and other elements to suit the character of each street.

Streetscapes

The scale and rhythms of streetscape elements such as street trees, lamp posts and sidewalk paving affect the character and image of a neighborhood. Street hierarchies indicate a graded level of importance among streets, often related to their size and the amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic they accommodate. The scale of a street should also reflect the residential densities in neighborhoods. The widths of planting strips, sidewalks, front yards and driveways vary among different streets, particularly in the Capitol Heights neighborhood. Establishing common elements in neighborhood streetscapes will provide design continuity throughout the Capitol Area.

Objective:

Strengthen neighborhoods' sense of identity through their streetscapes.

Guidelines:

- n Use the width of planting strips and the size, type, and placement of trees to express the hierarchical importance of neighborhood streets.
- n Encourage the greening of streets as a part of the vision for a lush green river city.
- n Delineate the edges between neighborhood streets and commercial and institutional streets with distinctive streetscape elements such as pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- n Improve connections between neighborhood streets and commercial and employment centers.
- n Encourage pedestrian-scaled lighting on residential streets.

Building Frontages



Private homes with front yards oriented to the street are intrinsically gregarious, prompting social interaction and a sense of community.

In residential streets, set-backs or front yards provide transitional zones between the private and public domains of the street. Interaction and communication between neighbors in this transition zone fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for the welfare of the neighborhood.

Objective:

Design neighborhood streets to cultivate community.

Guidelines:

- n Encourage housing development on vacant lots to strengthen the neighborhood and complete the building frontage zone.
- n Orient front doors to the street to promote neighborhood stewardship and safety.
- n Define the frontage of residential lots with landscape features that relate to the street such as low fences, gates, hedges, and stoops. Avoid isolation from the street.
- n Configure buildings, windows and landscaping to provide clear views into streets and front yards to enhance a shared sense of responsibility for safety.

Neighborhood Commercial Streets

General

Neighborhood commercial streets may be central to an urban village, or may connect adjacent neighborhoods along a common boundary. Areas of commercial activity within CAAPB planning jurisdiction exist on the Sears Block; on University Avenue between Rice and Marion streets; on Rice Street between University and Pennsylvania avenues; and on Saint Peter and East 10th streets in the Fitzgerald Park area. The retail streets within the Sears Block and Fitzgerald Park have a regional-scaled commercial character, while Rice Street has a neighborhood-scaled character.



The revitalization of Rice Street continues to improve services to area residents and State employees.



Commercial streets such as Saint Peter Street in the Fitzgerald Park neighborhood have the potential of drawing visitors from the Capitol Campus across the freeway.

Amenities and services found on these neighborhood commercial streets attract and hold area residents, and draw visitors from the Capitol Campus and beyond. Rice Street and University Avenue remain active arteries of trade and act as two-way connectors between the residential neighborhoods of Capitol Heights, East Frogtown, Sears Block and the Capitol Campus. Retail activities on Saint Peter Street also act as similar connectors.

CAAPB staff continues to work with the local district council and organizations such as the North End Area Revitalization (N.E.A.R.) organization to improve the appearance of these commercial corridors near the Capitol Campus.

Streetscapes

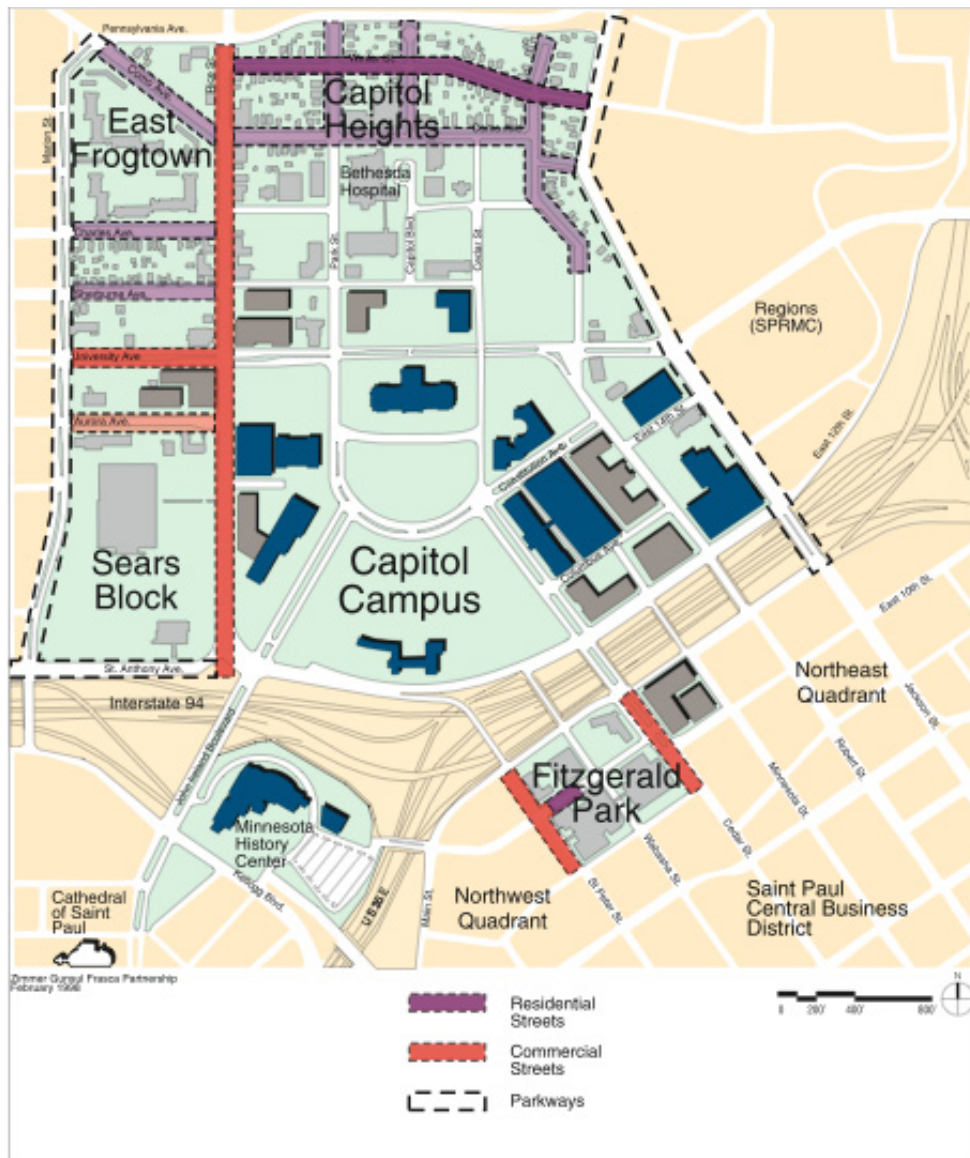
Objective:

Develop commercial streets to serve a variety of users and add diversity and quality to public spaces.

Guidelines:

- n Provide commercial infill development to strengthen commercial streets.
- n Reconfigure streetscapes to accommodate a mix of users: vehicular traffic, transit services, bicyclists and pedestrians. Maintain flexibility in street configuration for future IRT service.
- n Retain curbside parking for the convenience of patrons of commercial uses.
- n Provide street lighting on neighborhood commercial streets to serve both pedestrians and drivers, in accordance with the CAAPB *Lighting Design Framework for the Capitol Area, August, 1991*.
- n Encourage dense tree planting along sidewalks to visually define approaches and to shade pedestrians.
- n Limit street trees high enough to keep storefront sight lines continuous and visible to pedestrians and motorists.
- n Enforce standards for the number, location, size and design of billboards and business signs, eliminating billboards where possible.

Capitol Area Neighborhood Streets



This plan shows the critical connection between neighborhood residential and commercial streets. Como Avenue has special civic responsibilities that broaden its residential base.

Building Frontages

Bearing in mind that commercial streets in the Capitol Area often occupy Capitol view corridors, their building frontages should be continuous in order to frame views along the street. Continuity is also important to commercial success, and in creating an attractive pedestrian environment.



Proposed development on University Avenue near Rice Street and on Cedar Street near 10th Street bring building frontages to the property line, framing important views.

Objective:

Develop storefronts in continuous building frontages on neighborhood commercial streets.

Guidelines:

- n Set building storefront facades to the property line.
- n Encourage facade transparency at street level to promote pedestrian activity and safety. Avoid large areas of curtain wall, blank wall or mirrored construction.
- n Assist and negotiate relocation of commercial activities that lack pedestrian-oriented frontages in favor of more active and visible uses.
- n Emphasize contextual design appropriate to the scale and architecture of the area.

Landscape Framework

General

Cass Gilbert envisioned a network of public gardens connecting the Capitol Campus with the Mississippi River. These public gardens would serve those who live and work near them and connect different parts of the city with greenery. The Landscape Framework for the Capitol Area neighborhoods extends this concept and will contribute to a beautiful Capital City setting.



Open Spaces

Open spaces can influence and even shape personal and community identities. They must serve a multicultural society, celebrating the diversity within neighborhoods while providing a measure of meaning for all residents of a place. A series of linked spaces can integrate distinct neighborhoods. The formal effects of trees and landscaping features help unify neighborhoods and link their open spaces with those on the Capitol Campus.

We can support sociable behavior by creating outdoor environments that can accommodate events where people can gather for both programmed and unprogrammed activities, such as festivals or recreational activities. The initiative of neighborhood residents to acquire, develop and supervise open spaces generates the desired interaction.

Open spaces in the Capitol Area should complement existing parks such as Mears Park in a city-wide system of parks.

Objective:

Establish a system of linkages to and between parks in the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Make connections between open spaces to create a city-wide system of parks.
- n Maintain the dignity of open spaces in the landscape framework.
- n Secure endowments for the maintenance of open spaces and landscaping.
- n Assess existing parks, trails and open spaces and determine what else is needed.
- n Designate sites for additional green space with consideration for access, population density in surrounding blocks, and relationship to redevelopment activities.
- n Provide supportive open spaces such as parks or plazas as focal points and gathering places within each distinct neighborhood.
- n Accommodate a variety of community and recreational needs.
- n Provide for both active and passive open space uses.
- n Satisfy open space needs in new developments and deficient existing areas.
- n Encourage private developers to create open space within their projects at street level.
- n Establish neighborhood play areas and gardens on lots where new construction is not immediately foreseen.
- n Identify public and private funding sources for acquisition and maintenance of open spaces.
- n Create pedestrian corridors and greenways through the Sears Block to improve linkage of parks to the Capitol Campus.

Parking Lots

Consultation with area property owners and community organizations is necessary to minimize the negative effects of parking lots on surrounding properties and neighborhood character.

Landscaping can be effective in reducing the impact of a large expanse of pavement. Existing parking areas should remain visually screened, consistent with landscape guidelines. Landscaping and lighting should be designed to minimize opportunities for personal concealment.



Tree planting such as that pictured on the right, helps reduce the negative visual impact of surface parking lots but should not impede personal safety.

Objective:

Reduce the physical and visual impact of parking lots in the neighborhoods.

Guidelines:

- n Screen parking areas, with trees and native planting at the perimeter and in the interior of parking lots.
- n Consolidate large expanses of surface parking away from street frontages, into the interior of blocks and behind commercial buildings.
- n Provide for active, street-oriented uses on the street level of parking ramps facing key street frontages.
- n Clarify parking locations.
- n Coordinate lighting and landscaping to create a safe environment.

Buildings

General

The massing of a building has much to do with its civic importance. Buildings for State agencies will typically need larger footprints than buildings for commercial or residential uses. In mixed-use areas, particular attention must be paid to the relationship of each building to its immediate neighbors. Buildings of civic scale should be located where their prominence sustains the street edge and pedestrian activity. Local commercial buildings can provide the intermediary transition from the scale of larger public buildings to smaller private homes. This vital transition occurs often in the Capitol Area and must be addressed consistently.



Park Street contains a variety of building uses and demonstrates the importance of making gradual transitions in building scales.

Preservation, Renovation and Redevelopment Plan

Preservation, renovation and redevelopment plans in the neighborhoods offer opportunities for joint development that respond to individual, institutional and community needs. The most vibrant neighborhoods are those that have evolved with nearby institutions. The University of Minnesota and its associated neighborhood provides a good model. The Capitol Area should cultivate affinities with its adjacent neighborhoods which, as a result, will better serve the Capitol Campus.

The Capitol Area neighborhoods have recently experienced cycles of economic depression. Community groups have offered assistance for the rehabilitation of old buildings and houses. The CAAPB has a vital role in carrying its share of the effort to restore the vitality of the area.

The preservation of existing residential areas and the reintroduction of moderate-density housing in new construction are integral to the successful implementation of the Capitol Area's neighborhood strategy. Districts that are valued for their livability convey a sense of vibrancy and authenticity that make them desirable. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to promote mixed-use development in support of both institutional and residential needs.

Objective:

Improve neighborhoods through preservation, renovation and selective new development.

Guidelines:

- n Affirm existing residential areas to be free from State acquisition.
- n Preserve sufficient stock of lower-moderate to upper-moderate income housing to maintain a diverse mix of incomes, families and housing types.
- n Affirm CAAPB interest in aiding neighborhoods for revitalization.
- n Support City efforts to improve the living conditions of low-income families through housing subsidies patterned after Lowertown efforts.
- n Support efforts of current and prospective homeowners to rehabilitate homes in the community.
- n Encourage preservation, rehabilitation, and modernization of viable housing stock.
- n Provide incentives for people who work in the area to live in the area. Identify programs for affordable financing, repair and remodel programs, telecommuter options and walk to work incentives.
- n Encourage individual businesses to improve their buildings - even at a modest scale. The redevelopment of the area may be more successful if done incrementally.
- n Redevelop the Fitzgerald Park neighborhood as a mixed-use urban village with cultural institutions, retail and residential uses around a park. It would provide an active transition between the Capitol Campus and downtown Saint Paul, consistent with the City's Framework Plan.
- n Work with the City and others to stabilize critical hillsides along Jackson Street and north of Como Avenue that have threatened current and future housing stock.



Residential developments such as these moderate-density townhouses on Summit Avenue at Oakland Avenue enrich the character of a neighborhood.

Residential Uses

Housing remains a key component of neighborhoods close to the Capitol, and a diversity in housing types, ownership, and residents will enrich the character of each residential neighborhood. Design strategies based on a diversity of uses give neighborhoods the efficiencies they need to be active, sustainable communities. The diversity of residents balances out the economic make-up of a neighborhood and enhances community resources. Home-based businesses and live/work housing designs are also desirable.

While housing development is clearly outside the scope of CAAPB responsibilities, the health of the Capitol Area depends to some extent on neighborhood stability. Support of this aim is appropriate, and more direct action may be called for where redevelopment of part of a State-occupied block may be necessary. The CAAPB should support the development of housing with market rates ranging from lower-moderate to upper-moderate income to reflect the social and economic values of a mixed society.

Objective:

Encourage a diversity of housing choices and improvements throughout the Capitol Area neighborhoods.

Guidelines:

- n Foster programs to achieve a healthy mix of market-rate accommodations for middle-income families of diverse backgrounds.
- n Encourage a diversity of housing choices, ranging from single-family detached to moderate-density apartment units, in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the Capitol. Higher densities may be considered.
- n Encourage sufficient stock of quality homes available for purchase.
- n Facilitate an increase in the availability of homes near the work place for State and hospital employees in Capitol Heights, East Frogtown and the Northeast Quadrant.
- n Support tenant advocacy, assistance and training programs promoting residential stability.
- n Support affordability of existing rental housing.
- n Encourage the development of residential units above new commercial developments.



Uses that do not meet the street edge of important corridors should be encouraged to relocate in favor of more compatible uses.

Commercial and Institutional Uses

Essential to the stability of successful neighborhoods is a balance of living, working, shopping and social opportunities. Saint Paul continues to draw public interest organizations which occupy neighborhood commercial space. Commercial and institutional uses located near housing facilitate neighborhood stability and reduce dependence on transportation.

Objective:

Encourage a mix of commercial and institutional uses and improvements throughout the Capitol Area neighborhoods.

Guidelines:

- n Encourage the development of mixed-uses around the perimeter of the Capitol Area.
- n Encourage new commercial developments that serve local residents or employees within designated commercial districts and mixed-use areas.
- n Encourage new and active uses for existing ground floor spaces. Consider healthcare, drugstore, grocery, restaurant, vendor sites or similar uses.
- n Explore appropriate reuses for traditional corner store buildings such as artist housing, studios or small businesses.
- n Recognize that the presence of a stable workforce is a paramount factor in business location decisions.

Potential Development Sites - Residential

The Capitol Area neighborhoods are planned to complement the functions and identity of the Capitol, but also to become stronger places of community. An appropriate mix of housing types in each neighborhood is important. New residential neighborhoods are projected for the Northeast Quadrant. A recognition of residential development opportunities must be followed by advocacy for new housing that complements the existing community and the retention of viable housing for lower-income families.

Objective:

Capitalize on existing opportunities for residential development in areas undergoing transition.

Guidelines:

- n Encourage the construction of new ownership housing on vacant lots throughout the neighborhoods (encourages other property owners to make improvements and meets the needs of large families).
- n Recognizing that home equity is the largest source of household wealth, strive for home ownership for residents of all economic backgrounds.
- n Encourage inclusion of storefront units at street level in some residential developments.

Potential Development Sites - Nonresidential

Opportunities exist for non-residential development on vacant and under-developed sites in the Capitol Area neighborhoods. Appropriate development of these sites will correct problem areas, strengthen the vitality of neighborhoods, and more effectively serve the needs of Capitol Area visitors and employees. The CAAPB should be an advocate for development that enhances both the Capitol Area neighborhoods and the Capitol Campus.

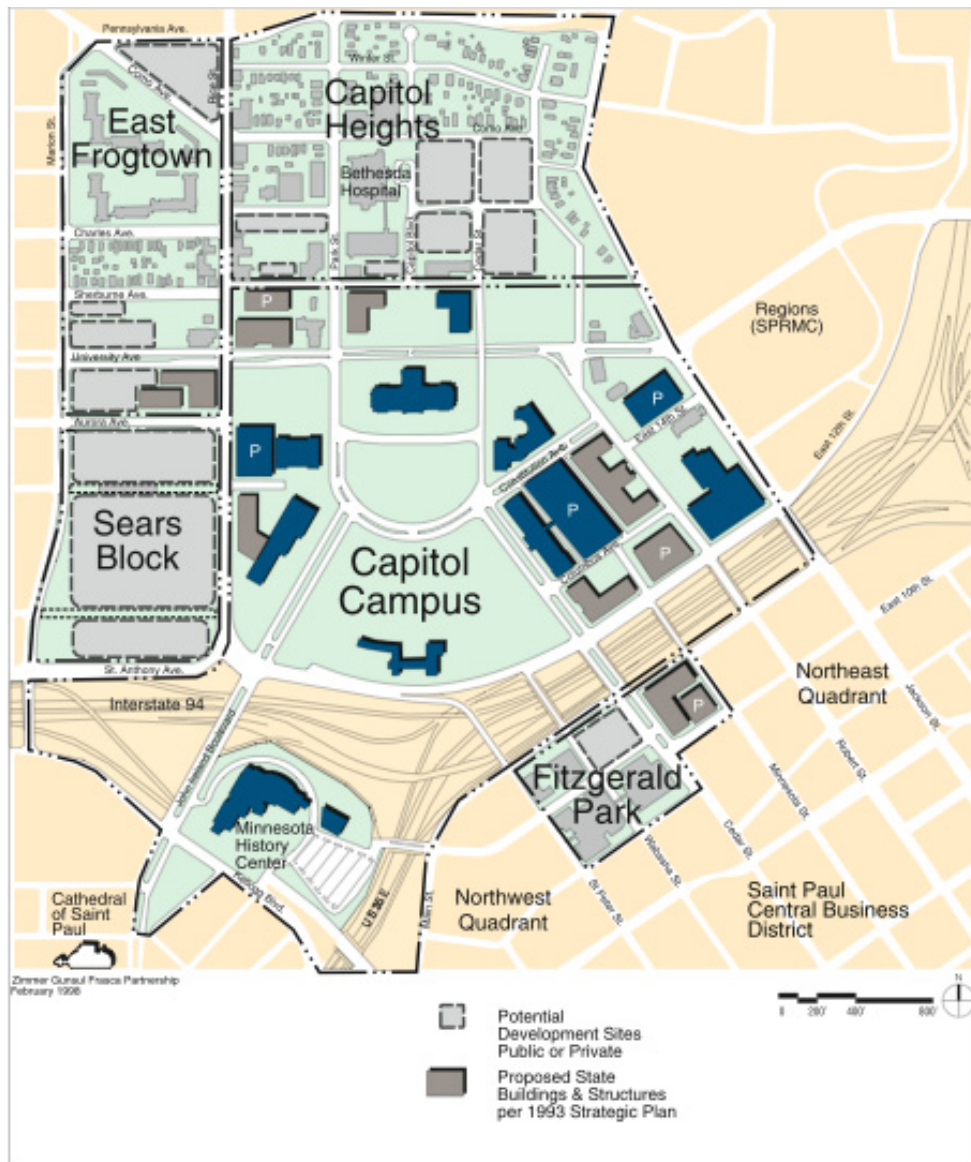
Objective:

Strengthen neighborhoods with local employment and service opportunities that also benefit the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Infill retail and services on neighborhood commercial streets such as Rice Street and University Avenue, which serve adjoining neighborhoods.
- n Construct only limited State facilities, particularly at the northeast and southwest corners of University Avenue and Rice Street.
- n Encourage inclusion of storefront units at street level in office developments.
- n Provide pedestrian corridors through large lots such as the Sears Block to reduce their scale and connect to the Capitol Campus.

Capitol Area Neighborhood Development Sites



Development sites within the neighborhoods present opportunities to enhance livability and support the needs of State employees.

Architectural Design Criteria

Design criteria by which the architecture of proposed neighborhood improvements in the Capitol Area will be evaluated should be established. New and remodeled buildings must respect existing qualities while acknowledging the values of the larger residential and urban community of the Capital City. Buildings are not isolated entities but are important pieces in a larger framework, and should be designed as such.

Objective:

Ensure that the quality of buildings in the Capitol Area is consistent with their proximity to the Capitol and in keeping with their neighborhood context.

Guidelines:

- n Ensure development proposals are compatible in height, massing, architectural style and character with existing housing, commercial and residential uses in the neighborhood.
- n Incorporate principles of sustainable community planning regarding design, layout, efficient land usage, spacing and use of common areas.
- n Ensure that new construction is supportive of the area's historic character.
- n Use ground floor activities and treatment as a means of tying together buildings of different size, shape and use.
- n Use materials higher in quality than typical infill or expansion housing. Favor a mixture of natural and low maintenance building materials (brick, stucco, or stone), and transparent storefront facades.
- n Recognize and protect the value of individual properties.
- n Maintain the integrity of design areas, not compromising building quality.

Signs and Visitor Information

General

Signs should be suitable in scale and design to their purpose and location. Directional signage should be graphically consistent. The values, objectives and guidelines for the Capitol Campus are applicable throughout the Capitol Area neighborhoods.

Objective:

Identify destinations within the neighborhoods clearly yet discreetly.

Guidelines:

- n Restrict the size and number of commercial signs.
- n Develop distinctive district signage.
- n Work with Capitol Area neighborhoods to coordinate motifs.

4 **Transportation**

Transportation Management Plan

General

As the largest employer in Saint Paul, the State has a profound effect on the area's livability, transportation demands, patterns of movement, and environment. The State has long recognized this and is implementing changes to make a positive contribution through enlightened transportation management. To save energy consumed in commuting, the State promotes carpools and vanpools and has appointed several transportation coordinators to assist employees in sharing rides to work. To reduce pollution, the State introduced vehicles powered by natural gas and ethanol into the vehicle fleet. Discounted monthly bus passes have been offered to employees as an inducement to use transit.

While each of these efforts has been modestly successful, the State also recognizes that departments operate in isolation from one another and face a substantial obstacle to achieving broader success — the relatively ample supply of subsidized parking. For example, although discounted monthly bus passes cost employees anywhere from \$45 to \$65, the most expensive parking costs only \$63 and the majority of parking spaces cost only \$17 per month. The parking rates fall well below the cost of providing parking to employees. The effect of this long-standing employee “benefit” is that driving alone has become the most economical means of getting to work for many State employees.

Status

In July, 1997 the State hired a full-time transportation coordinator to implement a unified transportation policy to manage the State's Capitol Area transportation demand. This follows recommendations made in the 1993 *Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies*, which outlined a transportation management plan to reduce employee commuting to no more than 50% of employees driving alone. This would result in approximately a 20% reduction in parking demand, saving valuable space and millions of dollars in future construction costs as additional agencies relocate to the Capitol Area.

The Transportation Management Plan is expected to take 10-12 years to be fully effective. The thrust of the plan is to bring parking rates in line with the full cost of providing parking. Parking surcharges for single-occupant vehicles will be used to subsidize the cost of bus passes, van pools and bicycle commuting. The plan will also work to develop a comprehensive transportation budget to allow comparisons of the cost-effectiveness of adding new parking relative to providing better and cheaper alternatives to driving alone.

Access and Circulation

General

In general, the area has ample street capacity for the amount of traffic it carries. Most streets serve the local needs of adjacent buildings and activities, save for University Avenue and Rice Street which carry through traffic. It is the through streets that largely define the neighborhood boundaries within the CAAPB planning area (though Sherburne Avenue is the functional boundary between the Capitol Campus and the Capitol Heights neighborhood, University Avenue is perceived as the boundary).

Traffic counts show that while volumes have increased on interstate highways since 1990, they have stayed the same or even decreased on major streets. This is due in part to freeway projects that have improved access and increased capacity, providing a convenient alternative to through movement on surface streets. The stability of traffic volume is also indicative of stability in the area's land uses.

Fulfillment of the vision for the Capitol Area concerning access and circulation focuses on improving *neighborhood* access so that neighborhoods will become better connected with the services and activities they seek. This includes all modes of transportation, not only cars.

Street Types

The City of Saint Paul is evaluating a new system of downtown street classifications based on the vehicular and/or pedestrian function of individual streets. The figure on the opposite page shows the proposed classifications within the CAAPB planning area. Most streets in the area's neighborhoods are recognized as local access streets. The City's intent is to balance the function of downtown streets, and not to elevate them to a higher functional classification.

Though streets within the planning area have distinctly different functions, all must fulfill the same basic neighborhood and campus demands: the need to walk to work, to shop, to catch the bus, or to get exercise and recreation, and the need to drive and to park for services and employment.

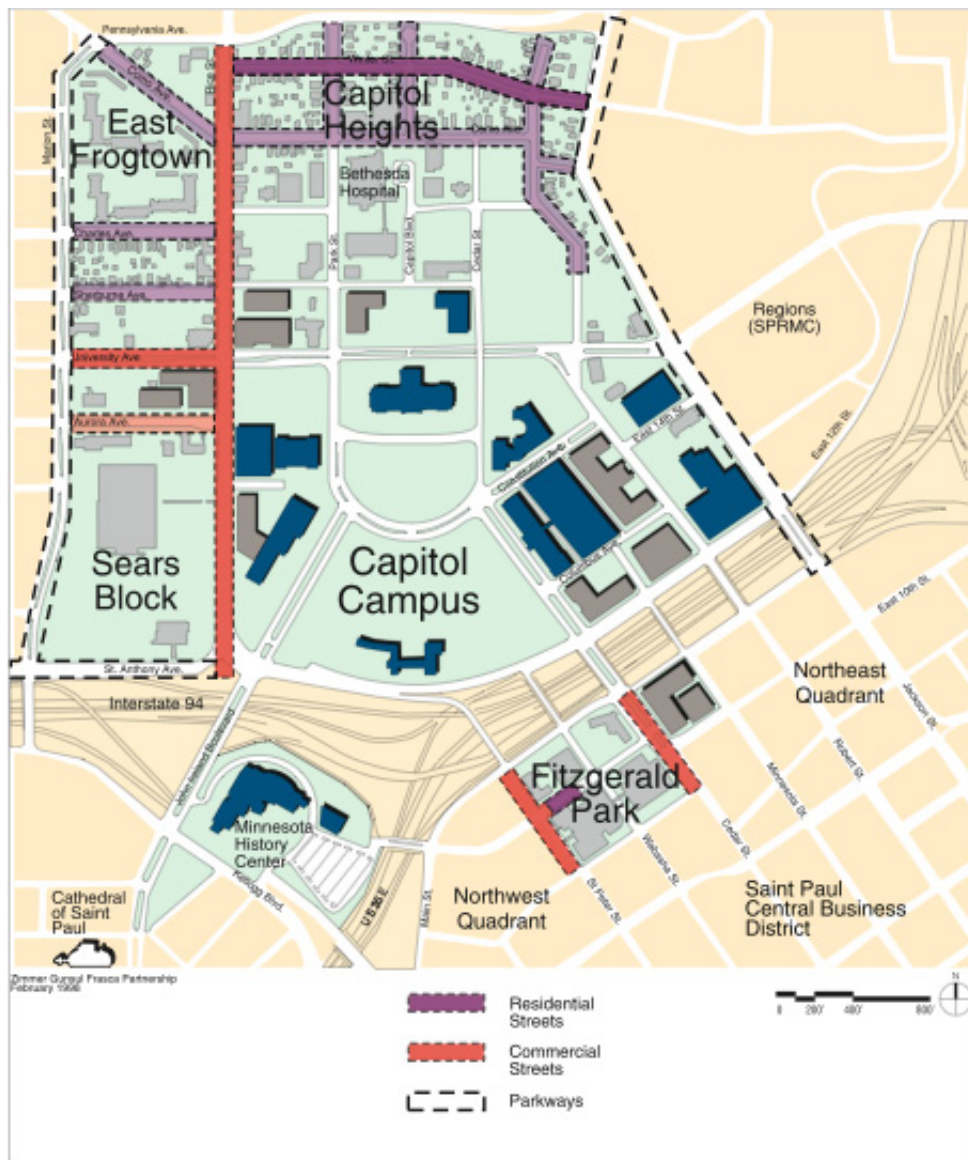
Objective:

Make streets compatible with their neighborhoods' variety of vehicular and pedestrian access needs.

Guidelines:

- n As a priority, reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts by providing safe crosswalks.
- n Shorten pedestrian crossing distances wherever possible, and highlight crosswalk locations.
- n Investigate opportunities to provide more on-street parking, especially on University Avenue and other commercial streets.

Street Types and Traffic Volume



Traffic volume counts indicate University Avenue and Rice street as principal corridors through the Capitol Area.

Functional Classification

The street map classifies each street in the system according to its function, that is, to what extent a street operates to move traffic and to what extent it operates to provide access to abutting properties.

These classifications are consistent with County, Metropolitan, and State transportation plan classifications (except for any "local access streets", which is a special local designation).

The classifications are:

- n **Freeway System:** I-94 and 35E.
- n **Principal Arterial:** roadways on the metropolitan highway system.
- n **Minor Arterial, Class A:** the main access routes to principal arterials for people beginning or ending their trip within Saint Paul. These routes also provide access to the Central Business District (CBD) and to regional business concentrations.
- n **Minor Arterial, Class B:** provide access to Class A Minor Arterials and to Principal Arterials from the neighborhoods.
- n **Collectors:** provide access to the arterial network. Also provide for movement between adjacent neighborhoods to replace some function of the minor arterials. Some through movement is accommodated.
- n **Local Access Streets:** provide access for neighborhoods and within neighborhoods.

Freeway Access

Convenient access to 35E and I-94 is essential to enhancing future economic opportunities in the Capitol Area, and to making the neighborhoods convenient places to live. Recent experience suggests that good freeway access also appears to protect the neighborhoods and Capitol Area from excessive through traffic.

Objective:

Maintain healthy commercial and residential neighborhoods with good freeway access.

Guidelines:

- n Maintain existing levels of freeway access.
- n Provide good directional signs leading to the freeways on major streets.

Service and Emergency Access

Commercial and institutional buildings require frequent and convenient service vehicle access. Emergency vehicles require quick, reliable access to all properties. All traffic signals in the City of Saint Paul allow emergency vehicles to pre-empt the signal, saving valuable time in responding to emergencies.

Objective:

Maintain a high level of accessibility for service and emergency vehicles.

Guidelines:

- n Provide service access to all new and substantially redeveloped commercial and institutional buildings. Service access should be from a side street, to minimize conflict with pedestrian circulation, and to maintain continuity of building frontage along main streets.
- n Permit small street-front commercial uses to use the street for service vehicle loading and unloading, within specified hours.
- n Maintain the integrity of the street grid and two-way traffic flow to aid efficient access for both service and emergency vehicles. Street closures typically thwart good emergency access.

Parking

General

Capitol Campus parking demands influence parking patterns and land use throughout much of the Capitol Area. The large number of employees and location of State buildings on the campus periphery create spill-over parking in adjacent neighborhoods. Increased demand during legislative sessions pushes Capitol parking into surface lots beyond the campus, such as Lot V. Some State employees working in downtown Saint Paul use the Sears lot for remote parking. Other institutions, including the hospitals, have experienced an increasing need for dedicated parking. Many of the homes in Capitol Area residential areas were built before the need to store automobiles became prevalent, so current residents must use the street to park their cars. Similarly, numerous commercial buildings were built without parking, and they must rely on curb-side parking to serve their customers. More recent commercial buildings were developed on large lots with their own parking, a pointed contrast in design and function to the older patterns.

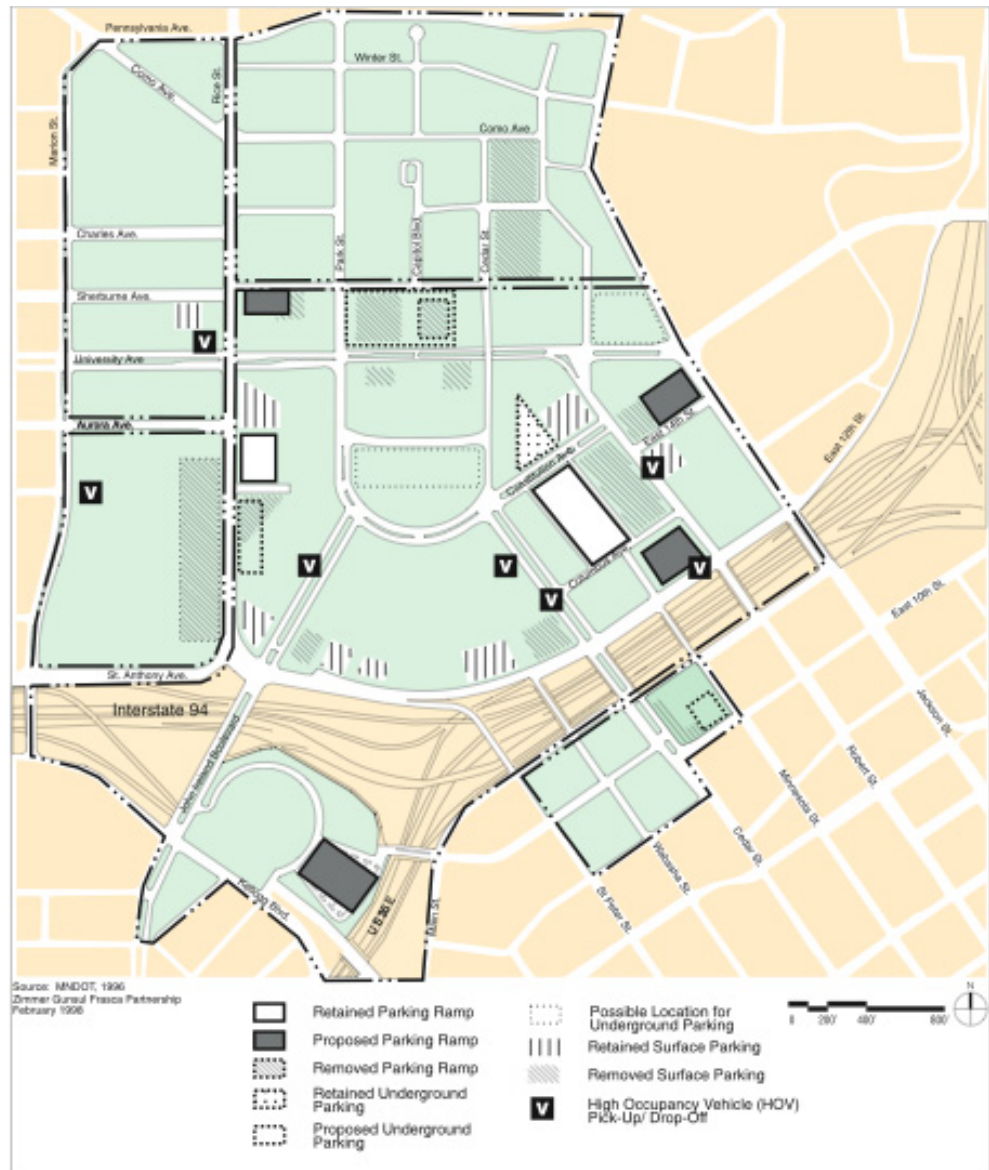
Objective:

Serve the diverse needs of the Capitol Area with a parking system that conflicts with, or pre-empts, other uses as little as practicable.

Guidelines:

- n Consider establishing a residential parking zone in Capitol Heights as an interim step in controlling employee parking on residential streets.
- n Review and revise, if necessary, on-street parking restrictions including time limits, hours of operation, and handicapped parking locations to meet customer needs.
- n Revise zoning requirements for parking, especially for commercial uses, to reduce the number of spaces required and capitalize on opportunities for shared use of parking facilities.

Parking



Over time, surface lots will be redeveloped and more parking ramps and underground parking will be provided.

Existing and Proposed Parking

As the Capitol Campus and surrounding neighborhoods continue to redevelop, many opportunities will arise to alter the area's parking system.

Objective:

Make the parking system clearly defined and logical; it should be obvious where visitors, customers, employees and residents can properly park.

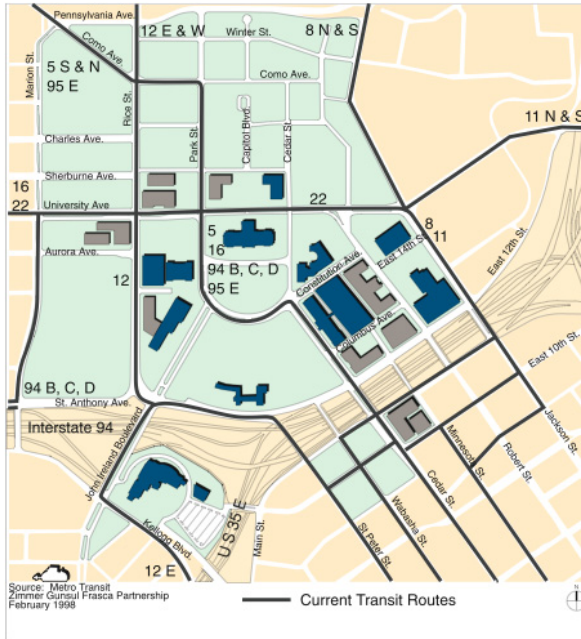
Guidelines:

- n Coordinate parking provision and management throughout the Capitol Area.
- n Limit State use of surface lots outside Capitol Campus boundaries. Within the campus, new parking should be provided in parking ramps with active street level uses. The Sears lot, however, could continue to serve as remote parking for State employees working downtown until the site is redeveloped or another parking solution is found.
- n Look for opportunities to provide additional on-street parking in commercial areas.
- n Provide clearly marked visitor parking supported by quality directional signs.
- n Work with other major institutions in and immediately adjacent to the planning area to identify their parking needs and plans, and to coordinate those plans with area-wide objectives.

Transit

General

Public transit in Saint Paul comprises of the bus system which is operated by Metro Transit and the trolley circulators, which are operated by an independent consortium. Light Rail Transit has been under serious consideration during the past decade, but no commitment has been made to its introduction.



Downtown Saint Paul serves as one of the metropolitan area's two transit hubs. As a result, taking the bus to the Capitol Area frequently requires a transfer at the downtown hub. Inconvenient transfers discourage transit use when traveling to the Capitol Area. For the future, the Saint Paul Transportation Policy Plan proposes a number of corridors converging downtown; the Capitol Area sits astride the proposed central transit corridor connecting Saint Paul and Minneapolis.

State employees are charged no fare to ride the trolley between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. The State provides this attractive incentive for its employees to use public transportation by underwriting the cost of fares. More active promotion of this free service would increase employee ridership. Transit will be an important part of the Capitol Area's future appeal in terms of convenience and accessibility for residents and employees. However, improved transit service will be essential to achieve needed levels of mobility and access.

Current transit routes through the Capitol Area.

Objective:

Make and keep transit service an integral feature of Capitol Area access.

Guidelines:

- n Work with Metro Transit to enhance routes and frequency of service in the Capitol Area.
- n Strengthen new partnerships and services to meet changing access needs of area residents and employees, and increase transit use.
- n Publicize and provide information about transit routes, schedules, and fares to employers, customers and residents.
- n Inter-relate transportation and land use to minimize traffic congestion and increase transit use.
- n Support the development of a touring train route through the Capitol Area using historic rail cars.

Bus System

Buses are the backbone of the transit system and will continue to be the primary form of transit in the Capitol Area in the foreseeable future.

Objective:

Promote transit as the most economical mode of travel for individual trips between the Capitol Area and other destinations in the metropolitan region.

Guidelines:

- n Investigate instigation of bus-pass programs (such as in Seattle and Boulder) that offer unlimited travel and other travel benefits in the Twin Cities for a very low monthly price.
- n Improve transit stops with better weather-protected shelters. Wherever possible, provided sheltered walkways from Capitol pedestrian tunnels to transit stops.
- n Determine whether additional direct bus service to the Capitol Area could be instituted,

Future Transit Routes



Possible future transit routes through the Capitol Area.

Pedestrian and Bicycle

General

Quality pedestrian and bicycle facilities say much about the character of a neighborhood and the appeal of living there. They improve convenience, increase safety and enhance recreation. They serve all persons regardless of income, age or other attributes. They are the most energy efficient and environment friendly modes of transportation. Pedestrian facilities essentially serve all people and should be universally present, while bicycle facilities should be available to all who choose to use them.

Pedestrian

Pedestrian connections are and should continue to be an essential element of the Capitol Area, since they form the initial and final segment of any trip. To the extent that people both live and work in the area, pedestrian facilities take on an increased importance in serving all segments of a trip.

Objective:

Enhance the pedestrian environment throughout the Capitol Area.

Guidelines:

- n Maintain clean, safe and attractive walkways throughout the Capitol Area.
- n Review and revise design standards for walkways to assure generous width and good lighting, and wheelchair accessibility appropriate to the adjacent land use (residential, commercial, recreational).
- n Provide new walkways through blocks if necessary to provide more direct connections between homes, shopping, employment and recreational areas. Walkways needn't only follow street patterns.
- n Require sidewalks on all streets and in general install them wherever absent.
- n Coordinate sidewalk design with lighting, signage and traffic management.
- n Design buildings with active and transparent streetwalls overlooking sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.
- n Continue to improve pedestrian connections between the Capitol Area and downtown Saint Paul.

Bicycle

Bicycle travel provides important transportation and recreational opportunities for area employees and residents.

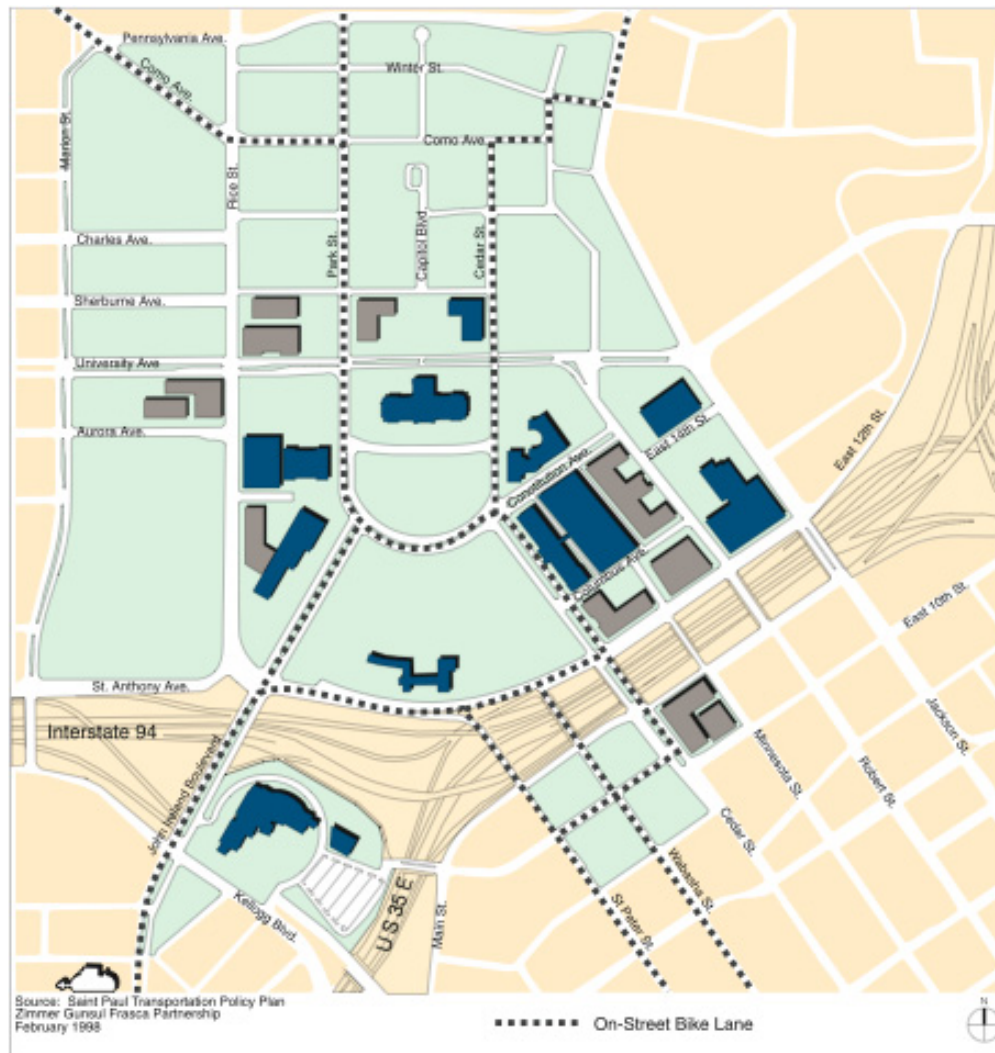
Objective:

Make bicycle facilities an integral feature of the Capitol Area circulation system.

Guidelines:

- n Cooperate with the City of Saint Paul to speed implementation of the proposed Bikeway Plan. This would provide striped bike lanes on selected streets.
- n Provide bike racks at major commercial and employment sites.
- n Work with Metro Transit to facilitate taking bicycles on board buses serving the Capitol Area.
- n Provide showers and changing facilities at State offices for employees.
- n Accommodate safe bicycle travel on selected major streets.

Bicycle Routes



These are bicycle routes as proposed by the City of Saint Paul.

Making the Vision a Reality

Zoning and Implementation Strategy

General

The Comprehensive Plan lays out a bold vision for the Capitol Area, calling for the enhancement of the Capitol Campus and reinvestment in Capitol Area neighborhoods. Implementing this vision will itself require visionary strategies. This section introduces an implementation strategy for making the vision a reality.

Relationship of Comprehensive Plan, Specific Actions and Zoning Documents

The Comprehensive Plan is the chief source document in a series relating to the future of the Capitol Area. The Comprehensive Plan propounds a vision for the Capitol Area, and gives form to that vision through a series of statements and objectives relating to constituent areas and topics. While the Comprehensive Plan is a complete and self-contained statement of vision, policy and intent, it depends on three other volumes for its implementation. These are entitled *Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area*, *The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies* and the *Capitol Area Zoning and Design Rules*.

Specific Actions for Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota State Capitol Area details initiatives to be undertaken in the immediate future to begin implementation of objectives stated in the Comprehensive Plan. It provides the means to measure implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. By separating these immediate and specific actions from the Comprehensive Plan, that document's long-term viability and flexibility will be preserved without compromising its effectiveness. The Specific Actions document is an action plan that will become obsolete as changes are made. It is of value to the CAAPB in laying out a range of actions for which it can expect to be wholly or partly responsible over the next few years.

The Strategic Plan for Locating State Agencies is a twenty-year planning document that gives advance warning of probable State space needs and development demands in the Capitol Area and elsewhere. It is relevant because it provides the only glimpse into future State needs. The Strategic Plan has already been updated once, and periodic revisions are anticipated.

Capitol Area Zoning and Design Rules consists of development regulations which have been attuned to the specific needs of the Capitol Area. Regulations are derivative of policies and objectives stated in the Comprehensive Plan, and are designed to be consistent with City of Saint Paul zoning regulations applicable to adjacent properties. *Capitol Area Zoning and Design Rules* provides the CAAPB with a set of legal tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Funding and Development Strategy

The CAAPB's Zoning and Design Rules has the power to restrict but not initiate changes. The CAAPB largely depends on State funding for any improvements which are to be made. Initiatives described in the Comprehensive Plan and Specific Actions must depend either on State funding or on funding from other sources, possibly leveraged using State money.

Public-Private Partnerships

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the Capitol Area is effective partnering and joint development with the City. Just as the proactive support of the Mall redesign eased State funding of capital improvements, a similar type of partnership enables the State, City and private sector to integrate joint planning efforts in the shared vision to create a mixed-use Capital City. Expectations about how the City does business are changing. CAAPB should explore ways in which State and local governmental agencies can cooperate.

It is time to invest in partnerships for the enhancement of the Capitol Area in spirit with the concurrent revitalization of downtown and greater Saint Paul.

Governance Strategy

Safeguarding the vision requires that CAAPB staff and its advisors assume proactive roles with decision-makers, especially legislators and legislative staff. As the CAAPB authorizes design review and control, it must take "ownership" of the Capitol Campus and enter into partnerships with the community for the enhancement of Capitol Area Neighborhoods.

Keeping the Plan Current

However broadly conceived in its origin, the Comprehensive Plan should be kept current through steady reevaluation of the objectives and guidelines. It is recommended that the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Design Rules be revised and updated every 10 years. The Specific Actions should be continuously updated to respond to changing conditions in the Capitol Area.

Acknowledgments

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